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"BE GOOD ENOUGH TO TAKE YOUR HAND OFF THE REINS, MR. GORDON," SAID MISS LYSAGHT.

REPENTANT LILIAN.

[A NOVELETTE.]

CHAPTER I.

THE shades of the early winter night were falling over Mother Earth's wide bosom space as LILIAN LYSAGHT turned her mettlesome Arabs' heads towards home; and flicking them smartly with the whip sent them along at a pace which made Rogers, the elderly groom, who sat by her side, stiffly erect, with folded arms, tremble and quake.

For he knew the capabilities of the handsome animals—capabilities for bolting at the smallest pretext, be it understood; and his wilful young mistress would not allow that there was the smallest atom of vice about Bib or Tucker, or the smallest chance of their taking the bit between their teeth, and setting reins, guidance and

everything else at defiance, going off some fine day at a terrible rate, regardless of the smart phaeton at their heels, and its occupants.

They were such a pair of beauties, with their dappled grey, satiny skins, their arched necks, slender legs, and full dark eyes! Surely they would never be wicked enough to bolt, and kill or injure her, especially as she went almost every day to the stables, and fed them with sugar and other dainties, and they whinnied at her approach to show their delight.

No, Rogers was an old frump, whose nerves were destroyed from an over-indulgence in the soothing weed—an old alarmist, who was past enjoying the keen delights of sitting behind a pair of thoroughbreds while they rushed along at a frantic pace, tossing their manes and champing their bits.

They only enjoyed the racing as much as she did, and had no evil intentions—of that she was sure; and, of course, she, LILIAN LYSAGHT, aged eighteen years and eight months, the only child and petted heiress of Rigdon Lysaght, of the

How, knew a great deal more about horses than did old Dick Rogers, who was sixty-five if a day, and who had been in the stable since he was six months old, whose cradle had been a manger, and whose blanket a horse-cloth.

So she chittrapped gaily to Bib, and called loudly upon Tucker to go along, and they did go along, flying over the slippery roads like mad things; while the old groom sat bolt upright, resembling a stone figure more than a living man, and mutter to himself his usual complaint against females, and that "it warn't no matter o' good warnin' 'em, or sayin' anything, 'cos they allus was so heady—they'd only do jist that which pleased 'em, and it didn't matter the vally o' a moleakin if they knew they'd be killed—they'd do it all the same." Which was pretty correct as far as Miss Lysaght was concerned.

She was impulsive to a degree; always acted without a second's reflection; never could see danger in anything; enjoyed perilous climbs, drives, rides—adventures that most women

would have shrunk from, and was decidedly what Rogers termed "heady."

Nevertheless, despite these little faults, she was a very lovable girl, generous, kind-hearted, and affectionate, and the apple of her father's eye—that father whose loving but injudicious indulgence had made her what she was, and partially spoiled what, under judicious training, would have been a very fine nature.

"Well, dad, have you been waiting for your afternoon tea?" she asked merrily, as with a dexterous turn of the wrist she brought the Arabs to a standstill before the How, on the steps of which stood her father.

"Yes, pusey, I haven't had it yet," replied that individual, kissing her as she reached his side and held up a blooming face to be caressed.

"What a shame! What has Mrs. Field been doing that she couldn't give you your tea?"

"I don't know, my dear; unless it is that she has been sorting her wools."

"Sorting her wools!" repeated Lillian, with energy and contempt. "She might find a better occupation than that, or working those interminable and extremely ugly slippers."

"Well, I think she might now," agreed Mr. Lysaght, mildly. "I have ten and a half pairs, and I think those will last my lifetime."

And then father and daughter looked at each other, and both laughed as they moved towards the small drawing-room where that cheerful, chatty, but utterly useless and needless meal—afternoon tea—was always served; for Mrs. Field, and her harmless and transparent endeavours to entrap the master of the How, was the subject of much mirth and jesting between them.

Yet, truth to tell, the lady in question was rather an old man of the sea—a sort of ancient mariner to Rigdon Lysaght. In a way she hung round his neck—not actually, but metaphorically; in a way she fixed him with her eyes, which were not cold and grey—on the contrary, full and blue, and warm with amorous feeling, and button-holed him by the hour.

She was the widow of a distant poor relation; and some five years before, when Lillian returned from the fashionable boarding-school at which she had been educated, he, thinking she might be lonely without any female companion of her own rank, in a weak moment, listening to the artful insinuations of Mrs. Field, who on her husband's death had taken up her abode in a village contiguous to the How, on the off-chance of getting her foot within the portals of the house, which she coveted with a most unholty longing for her own home, yielded to her suggestion, and engaged her as companion to his daughter at a stipend of two hundred per annum.

In a weak moment he did this, and he never ceased regretting it. The buxom widow was suave and knowing, courteous and amorous patient and persevering. She never lost her temper; she was never ruffled; she was never anything save oily and fulsome, and detestably, inconveniently attentive to the master of the How.

His efforts to shake her off were in vain and useless; she would not understand his hints, and was amiably dense when he spoke plainly. He was a gentleman; he could not take her by the shoulders, and turn her from the door, though he longed to do so; and it seemed that that was the only course left—the only chance of escape from slavery.

For it was slavery. She hovered about him morning, noon, and night, and the only person who could frighten her away was Lillian, whose sharp tongue and imperious manner she feared.

He was an early riser, being fond of field sports; yet though he rose with the lark, and ordered breakfast at six occasionally, hoping to escape from bondage, he would find his tormentress presiding over the coffee and rolls, smiling and suave, and dressed with all her usual care.

If he went to the billiard-room she would follow, and inquire with an unctuous smile if she could mark for him, and when he curtly refused would seat herself and give vent to rapturous exclamations at each stroke, till he, flinging down the cue, would retire in disgust to his smoking room,

where, after a while, she would appear, bearing in her hand the gardener's clay pipe, or the butler's shabby tobacco pouch, and affectionately ask if it were his.

Then she was uncomfortably solicitous as to his diet, pressing him to eat oatmeal porridge, beef tea, mutton broth, or gruel, or other slops, suitable only for a toothless octogenarian, and most unsuitable for a hale, hearty, fox-hunting country gentleman of fifty. But, worse than all, she persisted in working woollen slippers for him, which took up a large portion of time that might have been better occupied, and presented them to him on all possible occasions—on his birthday, at Christmas, at Easter, and in the autumn.

Mr. Lysaght never attempted to put on a pair of these works of art—yellow grounds with black imps, red grounds with blue imps, grey grounds with green imps, gaudy bunches of flowers; impossible dogs and cats, heads, and other choice designs were favoured by the loving widow; and when finished, mounted, and presented were thrown helter-skelter with a heap of discarded shooting and riding boots in his dressing-room, and often made a meal for Brutus, the deerhound, who being young and frivolous had a fancy for boots and shoes, and finding the woollen ones soft preferred them to the others, to the unqualified delight of his master, who gave his valet orders that the hound was to have free access to the boot-room, and that no one was to disturb him while he was occupied in devouring the hated slippers, which by his noble efforts had been reduced from about forty to ten pairs.

There was no light in the drawing-room, as father and daughter entered, save that given by a glowing wood and coal fire, which sent a flickering, uncertain light over the rich gold-threaded Eastern curtains, the warm-coloured plush chairs, the grand piano, littered with valses and songs, over a table spread with a glittering tinselled cloth, on which was a Crown Derby tea service, and a lovely vase, containing a spray of the gorgeous poinsettia, whose vivid scarlet and green leaves shone in the firelight, and formed a pleasant contrast to the snowy vase.

"What is the meaning of this! Why are you all in the dark! Why haven't you had tea?" demanded Lillian, somewhat imperiously.

"Oh, really—dear me," stammered Mrs. Field, waking suddenly from a dose and fumbling at her work, "I—I have been so busy that I never thought of tea."

"Indeed! What have you been busy about?"

"These lovely slippers. Just look! Are they not uniquely uncommon—green frogs on a brick-dust ground!" and she held them so that the firelight fell full on them, and showed up their hideousness.

"I think they are particularly and exceedingly ugly!" replied Lillian, coolly, as she proceeded to make tea.

"Oh! Miss Lysaght!" exclaimed the worker of the green frogs—Lillian never allowed her to call her by any other name—"they are lovely!"

"A difference of opinion, and I will trouble you now to put your work aside and let us have a little light."

"Oh, no!" cried two or three voices from dark corners of the room. "Do let us have tea by the light of the fire!"

"But you won't be able to see," objected the young hostess.

"Yes, we will—pardon the contradiction," said a tall man, as he rose from the sofa on which he had been sitting beside a lady, and drew near Lillian. "They will be able to see quite well enough; and they like the friendly gloom," he added, in a lower tone, "and so do I."

"Just as you like," replied Miss Lysaght, with a little gesture of acquiescence, as she turned again to the manipulation of the Crown Derby cups, feeling a strange twinge of annoyance shoot through her; and she could not tell which annoyed her most—the fact of Colonel Roche, who had paid her much attention during the last six months, and had been most devoted, sitting beside Annie Desmond and whispering softly in her ear under cover of the

friendly dusk; or the fact of Annie Desmond, her old schoolfellow and particular friend, listening with apparent complaisance to the gallant Colonel's speeches.

After a few minutes' reflection she came to the conclusion that she was most angry with Annie, whom she dearly loved, and for whom she had been planning out a future, and at the same time a way for her father to escape from his tormentress.

Miss Desmond was a good-looking, steady, sensible young woman of five-and-twenty, fond of riding to hounds, going out with the beagles, early rising, pigs, poultry, and country life in general—just the sort of wife, in fact, for Mr. Lysaght, who with his bright brown eyes, ruddy face, and raven black hair, guiltless of a single white thread, looked not one day older than forty, and was a man any woman might be proud to call husband.

They would pair nicely, Lillian thought; and she was sure her father rather more than fancied this pretty, sensible piece of womanhood.

It was too bad that she should sit there in the dimly-lit room with Royston Roche, listening to his soft nothings and looking very well pleased, just as young lovers, and that theirs was—

"The delight of happy laughter,
The delight of low replies."

She was quite angry. Of course she did not care a bit about herself—it was all on account of her father and the tumbling down of her castles in the air.

It was nothing to her what the colonel did; he was at perfect liberty to flirt with whom he wished, and she knew he was one—she had heard so over and over again; yet she had not thought of him in the light of that most detestable of all objects—a male flirt, when he had been at her side, hanging over her chair, holding her fan, whispering in her ear, paying her all those trifling little attentions that women like and value from handsome men.

And Royston Roche was handsome, with a wonderful pair of dark-fringed grey eyes that had looked away many a maid's heart, both high and low; and he could be very winning and fascinating when he liked, and he had liked with Lillian, and strove to make himself agreeable to the utmost extent of his power, and last, though not least in the eyes of most women, he was said to be very wealthy—only said, because he possessed no estates, neither had he money in the funds, nor sunk in foreign bonds, nor houses, nor anything that brings in money—while his pay as a colonel, handsome as it was, was quite inadequate to his wants and extravagant expenditure.

Perhaps Messrs. Samuel Levy, Jeremiah Judah, and a few more of that choice fraternity, knew where the money came from which kept up the Colonel's neat phaeton and high-stepping horse, his trim valet, his choice wines and cigars, and which enabled him to indulge in so many costly tastes, to give such well-appointed dinners, to have a yacht in the season, and to be in the front rank of men of fashion.

Perhaps they knew, and perhaps they guessed that it was the ruinous rate of interest which he paid that was drawing those lines about the corners of his handsome eyes, giving at times a haggard look to the whole face, robbing it of half its charm.

How was it to end! The brilliant life—all show, glitter, and meretricious splendour.

Well they knew, and perhaps he did, too, in the dark moments when he faced the truth, looked fate in the face. It must end in blank despair, and a bullet from his own hand, or in a rich marriage.

These were the only two alternatives, and the gallant and extravagant son of Mars chose the pleasanter of the two, and cast about for a rich and beautiful woman, and had determined to throw the handkerchief to Lillian Lysaght.

Whether she would pick it up or not remained to be seen. But he did not fear. He had tamed wilder game, and the quarry in this instance would give noble sport; well repaid time and trouble expended.

With these thoughts uppermost in his mind, he stood beside her as she poured the fragrant

tea into the dainty cups, and watched the white hands as they glanced here and there about the equipage.

"Am I not to have any?" he queried, at last, when he had given tea to the six or seven people in the distant corners.

"I beg your pardon," she answered, hastily rectifying her mistake, while a vivid blush swept over her fair face as she met his eyes fixed tenderly on hers, "I thought I gave you some."

"No, you forgot me, utterly and entirely."

"I am very sorry. I will give you an extra lump of sugar to make amends," and she laughingly put in a huge lump.

"That is very good of you, but I shall require something more."

"Really! what is that?"

"I want to hear what you did all this afternoon, during that long drive, while you deserted us, me in particular," he concluded, in a lower tone.

"That is rather amusing," she rejoined, lightly, "considering that you and the others would not come. I suppose you were afraid of the cold?"

"I daresay the ladies were. What kept me from your side was having to write three imperative business letters."

"Were they very imperative?" she demanded, jestingly.

"They were, indeed," he answered, convincingly.

He did not add, though, that they were to Messrs. Samuel Levy, Jeremiah Judah, and Saul Moses, three of his most affectionate Israelitish friends, who never lost sight of his whereabouts for more than a week at the outside, and whose solicitude about his place of residence, and other little personal matters, was, to say the least of it, most embarrassing.

"How wretched it must be to have such letters to write!"

"It is, indeed, especially when it debars us from pleasures we wish with all our hearts to enjoy."

"I think, as the Yankees say, that I should 'let things slide' if I found they annoyed me."

"I don't think you would."

"And I am sure I should."

"I am not."

"Why? how can you tell?"

"I judge from your actions."

"What actions?"

"Several."

"Name them, please."

"Well, you wouldn't let visiting your poor people slide."

"Oh, no!" she cried, energetically, "but that is a very different thing. They might want some of the comforts I take them, and then they are disappointed if I don't go and chat with them once or twice a week."

"I am not surprised at that," he remarked, pointedly, letting his eyes dwell with somewhat bold admiration on her face.

"Old Dennis to-day," she went on, hurriedly, "wanted tea and snuff; if I had not gone, think how disappointed the poor soul would have been!"

"Doubtless; and many of the other old granules too. What number of gaffers and gammers do you play the part of Lady Bountiful to, Miss Lysaght?"

"About a hundred."

"So many as that?"

"Yes."

"Quite a little regiment. Do they all belong to your father's estate?"

"No; only about half the number."

"And the other half?"

"Belong to the Gordon estate."

"Ah! yes; Gordon Hall has lacked a master for some years past now, has it not?"

"Yes; for ten years before his death Colonel Gordon did not live there. He took a dislike to it after his wife's death."

"What a pity such a fine place should be neglected!"

"It is. But it will be neglected no longer."

"Why?"

"Because the new owner is coming to take possession."

"And who is he—some *nouveau riche*, who has bought the place with money made by soap-bolling, or pig-selling, or some other lucrative and unaristocratic trade?"

"By no means; he is Mr. Hugh Gordon, nephew to the late Colonel," and Lillian, as she spoke the name, turned her head a little aside, in case the treacherous fire should break into a sudden blaze, and show the blush on her cheek—the blush that rose at the mere mention of Hugh's name—Hugh, who was her childhood's playmate, her girlhood's lover, and whom she had not seen for over two years.

"Ah! then the Colonel had no family!"

"None."

"And this young fellow steps in. How old is he?"

"Twenty-six."

"And the Gordon estates yield a rent-roll of ten thousand?"

"Yes."

"He is a very lucky fellow. How is it that he has not entered into his new dignities before? It is over a year since Colonel Gordon died."

"He had an appointment in India, and did not seem in any hurry to give it up, and return to England."

"When is he expected?"

"To-morrow."

"To-morrow!" repeated the Colonel, in some dismay, for he felt this young millionaire might be a formidable rival. "So soon?"

"Yes. He is coming here to stay with us for a few weeks," continued Miss Lysaght, calmly, little knowing the stabs she was giving, "until his house is made habitable. For ten years only the housekeeper and three or four old family servants have lived there, so, of course, it wants a considerable amount of renovation."

"Of course," agreed Roche; "and it will be pleasant for him to be here with old friends than in a damp place, which has long been given over to the bats and the rats."

"I suppose you are old friends?" he added, a moment later, regarding her keenly.

"Oh! yes," she rejoined, with a gay laugh; "papa was a sort of guardian to him. After the Colonel left the Hall, and went abroad, Hugh came here, and lived with us."

"You must have been very good friends, then?"

"We were—just like brother and sister," and that answer relieved Royston Roche's mind considerably, and he prepared to welcome the newcomer on the morrow warmly.

CHAPTER II.

THE next day there was a decided thaw, and Mr. Lysaght, with some of his guests, set out for a meet which was to take place at Thorndyke Manor.

"You won't come, Lily?" he asked, as the horses were brought round.

"No," replied his daughter, "I think one of us ought to stay at home, in case Hu—, Mr. Gordon arrives."

"Quite so, my dear. I don't expect that he will arrive before the afternoon."

"Possibly not; still it would not be pleasant for him to find us all out. You probably will not be back before seven or eight."

"I shall be here, and can receive him if you wish to go," put in Mrs. Field.

"Thank you, I don't," replied Lillian, coldly, "and you might fall asleep, or become so deeply engrossed in your wool-work that you would forget all about our guest!"

"Oh, no," expostulated the fair widow, who was looking remarkably well in a blue cloth dress, which squeezed her stout waist to moderate proportions, "I should not do that. I should be so much interested in any friend of dear Mr. Lysaght's."

"Your interest is quite unnecessary in this case. Good-bye, dad," she added, to her father, who was leaving the room with Roche, "I hope you will have a good day's sport."

"I hope you will, too," said Mrs. Field, follow-

ing him to the door. "But pray, pray, dear Mr. Lysaght, do be careful. This is only a partial thaw; it will be very slippery in places, and dangerous going. Pray, pray be careful of your precious life. Do not ride recklessly. I beseech you."

"Oh, all right," responded dear Mr. Lysaght testily, feeling he was being made a fool of before his guests, while Roche said, jestingly,—

"Don't be frightened, Mrs. Field; I will look after our host, and bring him back safe and sound."

"Do, do," she implored, with clasped hands; and amid a shout of laughter, in which Annie Desmond, who was mounted on a smart little black mare, joined, the fox-hunters set off, Lillian noticing with keen satisfaction that her friend rode first with her father, and that Colonel Roche was between two men.

All that morning she flitted about like a butterfly, superintending the arrangements of the blue-room, which was being prepared for Hugh Gordon's reception. With her own hands she filled the vases with the choicest blooms from the conservatory, and settled the lace draperies of the mirror, and gave a last few finishing touches.

Then when all was done she went downstairs to await the arrival of her old playmate with what patience she could command, and patience was not one of her virtues.

Just before lunch-time she heard the roll of wheels on the gravelled paths, and, flying to the window was just in time to see a slender, elegant-looking man descend from a carriage.

"And are you Hugh?" she asked a moment later, as he entered the room, and clasped both her hands in his.

"Yes, I am Hugh," he answered, looking down at her. "Wouldn't you have recognised me?"

"I hardly know," she replied, gazing at him reflectively. "The beard makes such an alteration in you. I should know your eyes, though, anywhere," she added, as she met the glance of his honest, candid blue orbs.

"I shall owe a debt of gratitude to my eyes from this time henceforward," he laughed. "Three years does make a wonderful difference in a fellow, makes one old and haggard."

"You are not that," she declared, quickly. "You look quite young and fresh, and not at all like an Anglo-Indian."

"I am glad to hear it. Some of the nabobs I met out there were yellow as guineas or parched peas, their skin hung in wrinkles, their eyes were sunken, and they hobbled about in an awful fashion, their only interest in life being the state of their livers."

"Poor creatures! I pity them. Those are the results of a long residence in the East."

"Yes, and of unlimited indulgence in brandy pawnee, Bass's ale, highly seasoned curries, mounds of hulsah, and other indigestible dishes."

"If that is the case they are not deserving of pity."

"Perhaps not. Yet those who have never been in India cannot imagine the delights of a draught of lead ale after having been out in the scorching heat, under the rays of the brazen sun."

"I suppose not. And are you glad to come back?"

"Need you ask?"

He turned his beautiful eyes on her with a look that brought the blood to her cheek, and made her tremble.

"Life in the East is—so—so—so like a fairy tale," she stammered, helplessly.

"It may be so under some circumstances. I prefer England, because my dearest friends live here."

"Lunch is ready," she said, quickly, as the sound of the gong rang through the house. "You must be famishing after travelling all night."

"I am rather hungry," he admitted, as they crossed the hall and entered the dining-room, where Mrs. Field was seated in solitary splendour.

"My dear Mr. Gordon, I am so very, very

glad to see you again," she commenced, effusively, taking his hand and squeezing it tenderly. "It seems an age since you left us!"

"It does, indeed," he agreed, rather taken aback by the squeeze, and wondering whether he ought to return it or not. "Time, however, has passed you over. You don't look a day older than when I left."

"Ah! really you don't mean that!" she simpered.

"I do!" declared Hugh, taken in by the wonderful get up of the widow, the artistically rouged cheeks, the darkened eyes, the compressed waist. "You're looking wonderfully well!"

"Thanks, thanks; and Miss Lysaght, she has altered, has she not?"

"Yes. She was just at the budding age when I left, now she has bloomed."

"In fact, I'm full blown," she said, with a wicked smile, and a side glance at the widow's comfortable proportions.

"Not quite yet," he retorted; "but there is no knowing what you may come to if you don't take plenty of exercise. You are somewhat inclined to *embonpoint*!"

"Quite so," she agreed, surveying her slender figure in the mirror opposite, with quiet approval. "I do take plenty of exercise, I inherit the liking for it from my father, I suppose."

"I suppose so. He is extremely active."

"Rather too much so," chimed in Mrs. Field. "Fancy, only fancy a man riding to hounds on a day like this, when the thaw is but partial! It is most foolhardy—absolutely madness!"

"I don't think so, and if I had arrived yesterday I should have made one of the party."

"And I," said Lillian.

"But he may be killed," sighed the amorous widow. "His horse may fall and roll on him."

"The same accident might happen to any other member of the hunt."

"That wouldn't matter so much," she announced, coolly.

"Not to you," observed Miss Lysaght, "still to others it might. There are others who have objects on which they expend their heart's best affections, and perhaps not so hopelessly as you do."

"You are right," rejoined the widow, with sudden venom, for she secretly hated Lillian. "It would matter very much to you if Colonel Roche's dead body was brought here and laid at your feet."

"Mrs. Field, you forget yourself!" said the young mistress of the house, with great dignity rising from the table, closely followed by Hugh, who felt that he should like to box the fat woman's ears for her impertinence, and also because a thrill of pain at her words, the first of many and many an after twinge, shot through his heart.

"Shall we go out?" asked Lillian, pausing in the hall.

"If it is not too damp and cold for you."

"It is very seldom that for me," she responded.

"You still go out in all weathers?"

"Yes. I think it is that which makes me so strong and hardy."

"Probably."

"Will you wait here! I won't be a moment," and in an astonishingly short space of time she returned, clad in a long sealskin coat, and a toque of the same fur, with an orange-coloured bird at the side, perched jauntily on her jetty tresses.

"How charming she is!" thought the man at her side. "How lovable! What a treasure for some man to possess! Some man! Yes, and who is this man that venomous old toad speaks of—this Colonel Roche? Does she love him, I wonder! She flushed at his name. Are all my hopes to be blighted! Have I come these many hundred miles to hear a 'no' from her sweet lips! Heaven send not. I love her so well, my little playmate, my boyhood's sweetheart! All my wealth will avail me nothing if I lose her—the greatest prize life holds for me!"

These thoughts kept him silent as he paced along through the woods, where the bare branches seemed to speak silently of the young

year, of the advancing spring, which would bring bud and bloom.

The cinquefoil was of a faded green, and the wild pansy fresh-looking; some black privet-berries remained, and a few ivy-berries yet clung to the parent stem, overlooked by the hungry birds, who long since had taken the acorns, which in autumn thickly carpeted the earth.

Grey-veined ivy trailed here and there, and a few fronds of fern peeped out amid the greenish lichen; beyond the gorse was sparsely sprinkled with golden blooms; and in sheltered spots the homely dandelion was opening—otherwise there was a singular absence of colour.

Nature seemed faded, almost dead, and as though she had not the energy to arise and make an effort towards regeneration.

"What is that?" asked Lillian, as a quick note rang through the air, and then a short burst of song.

"The first was a chaffinch, the second a thrush."

"How early for them to sing!"

"Yes; but thrushes sing, irrespective of the season, every mild day in January; and if the sun be shining to-morrow morning I have no doubt in this quiet spot that the larks will soar and sing."

"I shall come out and see."

"Do—and I will come with you, if I may!"

"Of course you may," she nodded, smilingly.

"Thanks!" murmured Hugh, feeling happier than he had since the mention of Colonel Roche's name.

"Where did the meet take place to-day?" he asked, after a silence of some minutes.

"At Thornadyke Manor," replied his companion.

"Ah! do they still meet at the same place?"

"Very often."

"I am sorry I was not in time to go out with them. I should have enjoyed a spin with the hounds."

"Yes; so should I."

"And my expected arrival prevented you?"

"I did not wish you to arrive and find no one to welcome you, or only Mrs. Field."

"You think she would be worse than nobody?"

"Far worse."

"So do I. How am I to thank you for staying at home to welcome me?" he asked, tenderly.

"It was nothing, really. A hostess could not do less."

Her words sent a sudden chill through him. It was simply an act of courtesy, then—nothing more! It was not from a wish to see him and greet him alone, free from the espionage of prying eyes, that she had given up her gallop after the red rouge.

"Shall we walk on to Glaston Fallowfield?" she asked, breaking rather an awkward silence.

"If you wish it, and are able for so much," he returned, with ceremonious politeness.

"I am quite able," she said, quickly; "and we may see some of the sport there, if the fox heads that way—or, at least, meet them returning."

"Yes," he agreed, absently, his eyes fixed on the range after range of distant hills, attaining almost mountain heights at last, behind which lay the home of his forefathers, the splendid inheritance which has been left him, and to which he hoped some day to bring the lovely girl at his side.

On they walked in silence, he busy with his thoughts and rosy hopes of the future, which seemed to hold such fair, such brilliant possibilities for him, she straining her eyes to catch the first glimpse of the scarlet coats that might come that way.

On they went by the half-thawed river, which curled and wound like a silver serpent through the valley—on past leafless woods and groves, through Lambton Spinny into Rankdene Gorse.

"Do you think it advisable to go any further?" he queried, with an anxious look at the rapidly darkening sky.

"Perhaps not," she replied, reluctantly. "Oh, there they come!" she added a moment later, as a party of ladies and gentlemen, mud-beat-

tered and road-stained, rode out of the wood and came towards them.

"Why, pussy," cried Mr. Lysaght, reining up, as he caught sight of her, "what has brought you here?"

"I walked over with Mr. Gordon," she answered, making a little movement with her hand at the man by her side.

"Bless me, Gordon! Hugh, is it really you? I shouldn't have known you. How you've altered!"

"Haven't I!" originally remarked Hugh, as he grasped his host's hand.

"So glad to see you," and he shook the young fellow's hand again and again in his delight.

"Come, I must introduce you to my other guests—Colonel Roche, Mr. Gordon; Miss Desmond you know," and so on and so on, until Hugh had bowed to some, shaken hands with others, and made the acquaintance of all.

"What sport had you?" Lillian asked, as they set out on their return journey, of the gallant colonel, who reined in his horse to a snail's pace, in order that he might keep at her side, and not leave the field quite clear for the rival he dreaded, who walked beside her as though he had every right to do so, and meant to keep the right.

"Fair average," he replied, leaning down from the pignikin to answer her question. "First we had a very fast spin from Thornadyke over four fields to ground, and killed. Then we went to Hungerton Holt, found in the first quarter, and went straight away, over Quenibrook, which, as you know, requires jumping, by Goslington Thorp, and then nearly over the same line again.

Foxes lie out very much about there; fresh ones kept continually getting up in front of the hounds, who kept running from one to another, for over an hour, when they were stopped, and laid on again in Branksbane Burrows. Here we found a real good fox, who gave us a run of three hours, by Dachtent, over the brook to Gabledene, up to which point all went well. Here the grief began. First of all, many fell into the brook trying to ford it, including your friend, Miss Desmond."

"Was she hurt?" asked Lillian, anxiously.

"Not much, only soured," returned Roche, with a little laugh, which showed he had enjoyed the sight. "Then Mrs. Rendell had a bad fall on the road, and Major Bennett was thrown, and broke his jaw."

"Poor old man! I am sorry to hear of his accident."

"Yes. We did all we could for him."

"I might have suffered had I gone out, as it seems to have been an unlucky day."

"You might, but it is not very likely. You are too good a rider."

"Good riders sometimes come to grief as well as bad ones."

"Sometimes, not often, when they ride as you do," and there was so much bold, undisguised admiration in the Colonel's eyes, and so much undisguised tenderness in his tones that Hugh felt that he should like to take him by the shoulders, and give him a thrashing, for his, what he termed, insufferable impertinence.

"Yet was it impertinence!" he wondered the same evening as he saw Royston hanging over Lillian after dinner, as she sat at the piano, and noted how soft the expression of her eyes was as she looked up at him; or had this man been encouraged by the woman he loved during his absence?"

It might be so. He had left her a girl of sixteen; he found her, after three years' absence, budding into a beautiful woman. She might have forgotten him and their childish love in the superior attractions of this dashing Hussar, who had all the qualities that please women. "I shall not have much chance against him," he muttered, gloomily.

CHAPTER III.

This notion grew stronger in Hugh Gordon's mind as the days rolled on, and made him retire, like a sensitive snail, within its shell, and appear somewhat cold to his old playmate.

The Colonel was ever at Miss Lysaght's side,

ready to do her lightest bidding. He sang with her, walked with her, danced with her; and last, though not least, rode with her, and in the last occupation he showed up to perfection.

"When the country is deepest, I give you my word
'Tis a pride and a pleasure to put him along;
O'er fallow and pasture he sweeps like a bird,
And there's nothing too wide, nor too high, nor too strong."

She admired his brilliant riding, his daring leaps, his firm seat, his untiring energy; still, sometimes, she felt she would like to ramble along at a quieter pace, and listen to Hugh's anecdotes of India, or hear about his plans for the future.

But the Colonel hardly gave her a chance of chatting to her old playmate; and Hugh, in disgust, would have left the house at the end of a week had it not been for Mr. Lysaght's protestations.

He declared that Lily would be more than disappointed though she might not acknowledge it, if he left them; that she had looked forward eagerly to his arrival, &c., &c.; and the wish being father to the thought, the young man plucked up a little courage, believed that it was so, and gave her a magnificent jade necklace, which he had brought over.

"Is it really for me?" she asked in delight, as he gave it.

"Yes, really. I brought it over on purpose for you."

"How good of you. I shall never be able to thank you enough."

"Don't try, please. It repays me to know you like it."

"I do, indeed. I am so fond of Indian ornaments."

"I am glad of that, for I have some tiger claws and dilgree aliver things for you. They have been sent on to the Hall, but we can get them to-morrow when we go over there. You are coming, are you not, to see the alterations?"

"Oh, yes. I have been looking forward to seeing the old place again. Fancy, it is ten years since I was there."

"Quite an age!" he said, with a fond glance at her, for her cordiality was raising hope within his breast once more, and fanning it into a strong flame. "You will see the difference, I think."

"I hope not a very marked one. I like everything that is antique, and always feel as if I should like to kill people who renovate and repair and destroy old buildings."

"I hope you won't slaughter me," he laughed.

"Do you deserve death?" she asked, in the same spirit of jest.

"Hardly," he returned. "I have tried to improve, not to destroy, and hope your verdict will be favourable to-morrow."

"I shall be very critical," she declared.

"Do; I want you to be so. To find fault, to suggest alterations to tell me exactly how you would have things done, the house arranged, and what you don't like."

"But why should I do this more than anyone else?" she asked, raising her eyes to his, and dropping them consciously as she met his impassioned glance.

"Because I hope one day that you will be—"

"Miss Lysaght, are you not coming for a ride this splendid afternoon?" broke in Roche's voice, across the pleading tenderness of Hugh's, as the latter entered the room, booted and spurred, and ready to mount.

"Not to-day," she answered, feeling half cross and half pleased at the interruption.

"Do. I have ordered them to saddle Memory for you."

"I can't really come. I have an engagement."

"Yes, here is the person to whom she is engaged," said Miss Desmond, appearing in the doorway. "I have come to claim my victim."

"The victim is quite ready," said Lillian, rising at once and joining her friend.

"Then we can depart," and the two girls went up to Lillian's room, and over sundry cups

of afternoon tea the news was imparted that Annie Desmond had promised to become, at no very distant time, mistress of the How, and emancipate Mr. Lysaght from slavery, free him from the clutches of the fat, fair, and amorous widow.

"I suppose Annie has told you the news!" he said next morning to his daughter, as they stood together alone in his smoking-room.

"Yes. I was so glad to hear that it was all settled," she answered, kissing him.

"So am I," he cried jovially, returning her embrace. "I feel a different man now that I know that dreadful woman, with her dreadful slippers, will have to go."

"I suppose so. You will have to pension her."

"Yes. I shall give her a hundred a year while she keeps a hundred miles away from the How. The moment she comes a foot nearer I shall stop it."

"Bravo. That's right."

"And now, have you nothing to tell me?" he asked.

"No," she replied, with evident confusion. "What should I have?"

"Well, pussy, Hugh has been speaking to me about you and his future. The old boyish love has not died out, it burns as steadily as ever; you have only to say 'yes,' and you will be mistress of the finest country seat for miles round, and wife to a noble fellow. He thinks you have still some affection for him."

"Does he?" broke in Lillian, while a red spot burnt furiously in either cheek. "What justifies his thinking that?"

"Well—well, my dear, I hardly know," stammered her father, startled at this burst of indignation. "Your behaviour to him, I suppose."

"He may find my behaviour different for the future," she said, significantly.

"What had have you got in your head now?" he asked, with some irritation. "I hope you won't be foolish, and throw away the chance of the best match in the county."

"I shall act as I please about that."

"I imagine so. You generally do not as you please. Is it possible you prefer Colonel Roche? Of course he is very fascinating and handsome, but he has not the same sterling qualities that Gordon possesses, and though well off"—Mr. Lysaght knew nothing about Jeremiah Judah and Co.—"cannot have such an income as Hugh's."

"Am I to sell myself, then, to the highest bidder?" she asked, with scorn.

"By no means," he rejoined, with cold displeasure. "Yet you seem to forget that I am going to marry again a woman of your choosing, and that if I have a second family your inheritance will be considerably smaller than it is now."

"I don't forget that, dad," she said, as she kissed him penitently.

"And you will be sensible and—"

"Not if being sensible means accepting Mr. Gordon," she interrupted, with flashing eyes.

"No man has a right to assume that a woman loves him before she has said so—to think that he has but to ask and receive at once what he wants—to believe, in fact, that a woman is ready to fling herself into his arms."

"I am sure Hugh does not think that."

"It seems to me that he does."

"You take a wrong view of the case."

"Perhaps so. My views, however, are not likely to alter."

"In that case it is useless to discuss the matter any more."

"Quite so; and we haven't time. The coach has just driven up to the door. We shall have to start in a few minutes."

"Yes," agreed Mr. Lysaght, lugubriously, as he followed her into the hall, where most of his guests were assembled, feeling that he had done Hugh's cause more harm than good.

All was bustle and confusion for a few moments, till each one was in their proper seat; and then the coach, hored by four bright bays, went off in great style to the fanfare of the groom's horn.

It was a beautiful February morning—soft, mild, balmy; and the greater portion of those

seated on the coach enjoyed the fifteen-mile drive through pretty scenery.

Not so, however, Lillian. Her impetuous, undisciplined spirit was wounded by what her father had said—her dignity offended, her pride humiliated; for it seemed to her that it was humiliating that any man, even her old playmate, should think she loved him.

She determined to revenge herself to show how mistaken he was, but all the same her heart ached, and she felt dull and listless.

"How lovely!" cried Annie Desmond, as, turning a sharp corner, they saw the pretty village belonging to Hugh winding its white way up the hillside, here and there nestling into bowers of the freshest greenery, fresh with all the budding sweetness of spring.

The great hills, towering range beyond range, formed a half-circle about the little village, sheltering it from bitter winds, stretching out their rocky arms far into the sea, making a safe haven for the fisherfolk's boats, which lay drawn up on the wet, shiny beach, a fine stretch of sand for them to dry their nets on.

There was an air of perfect repose about this miniature town—a peaceful look of rest—which was very pleasing to London eyes; and even the gallant colonel gave vent to some words of admiration, which grew louder and longer as they came in sight of Gordon Hall, which was charmingly situated at the foot of one of the great hills that encircled the valley and village, and at a bend of the river, which wound in and out among the hills, gurgling its way merrily over mossy stones and shining shingle through the village to the sea.

The house was of the Stuart era, and bore signs of the battering it had received from time to time when its possessors had defied Cromwell's Ironsides, and later on, when gallant Jacobites had hidden behind its strong walls. It was irregularly picturesque, with its mulioned oriels, battlemented walls, and dormer keep; and though grey, hoary, and time-worn outside, was thoroughly comfortable inside.

What could be pleasanter than the dining-room, where the young possessor brought his guests first, and where luncheon was laid out, with its carved oaken doors and fireplaces, its beamed ceiling and panelled walls, its polished floors and brightly-tinted oriels windows; or the corridors, stretching the whole length of the house, and the square gallery looking down into the entrance hall, or the stately drawing-rooms, with the antique tapestried chairs, and old-fashioned lounges, and furniture, which Hugh had taken pains to have renovated in an ancient style, so that no one looking at the Watteau tapestries, so costly so antique looking, would have guessed that not six months before they had been manufactured in France!

The same care, the same good taste, was visible everywhere. It had been a labour of love preparing the nest for the bird—the bird that perhaps would never fly to it, and Hugh was pleased to hear the encomiums of his guests. If the arrangements pleased them, he might surely hope that they would please her, the woman he loved, the woman he had laboured in all his endeavours so sedulously to please.

"This is more to my liking," observed the Colonel, as the exploring party, after having examined the family portraits, many dim and faded, and the men in armour in the entrance hall, and the battle-field trophies of Gordon's martial ancestors, found themselves in a large boudoir, furnished entirely in the modern style.

The change was striking. They stepped from a mediæval hall full of weapons, dating from the Wars of the Roses, and grim figures clothed in steel, into a splendid apartment, hung with modern tapestry, and furnished with extreme luxuriance. Exquisite marble statues, rare china, valuable pictures, inlaid chairs, satin couches, rare antiquities, gossamer lace worth their weight in gold, jewelled miniatures, exquisite carvings, crowded this apartment, and made it fairylike and lovely.

"Yes, this is more to my liking," he repeated. "Everything bright and new; those dull old rooms are depressing. Don't you think so, Miss Lysaght?"

"No," she replied, promptly. "I like antiquities, and much prefer ancient rooms to modern ones."

Eagerly Hugh listened for her answer, and a look, half disappointment, half-pleasure, spread across his face as he heard it. She certainly did not seem to approve of the room he had specially prepared to be her own boudoir; but then, at the same time, she had disagreed with the Colonel, and that gave him considerable satisfaction, for he spoke as though sure she would agree with him.

"*Chacun à son goût*," laughed Roche, lightly. "My *gout* decidedly inclines towards rainbow hues and modern improvements."

"It would not do for us all to like the same thing," remarked Miss Desmond, reflectively.

"No. I am inclined to think there would be a good deal of fighting in the world if we did—a good deal of blood spilled;" and the Colonel, as he spoke, eyed Hugh savagely, as he saw him whisper something into Lillian's ear which brought the blush to her cheek, and felt how much satisfaction it would afford him to put a bullet into his rival, to lay him low, so that he might never fear him again, never dread that the woman he coveted would become another's and be lost to him for ever.

"That is one of your sanguinary ideas," laughed Anne.

"It is an idea that would be terribly realistic if fifty—only fifty men, out of all the millions in the world—set their minds upon having the same thing."

"I daresay. You men are such queer creatures," and with that careless remark she followed her intended husband and the rest of the party, who were going out to look at the far-stretching chase, where the Gordons of old had hawked and hunted in bygone days, and where the graceful deer herded, and the timid rabbits flew along amid the tawny bracken.

Lillian declined to accompany the rest, and wended her way to the library, and taking down a volume of the "*Arabian Nights*," sat in the cushioned recess of the bay window, gazing out dreamily at the sapphire sea, almost smooth as a mirror, save here and there where a sleepy wavelet danced along, and dashed noiselessly against the shore. She had not been there many minutes when she heard someone beside her, and, turning, found Hugh had left his guests and sought her. He was gazing down at her with all the tender love he felt for her in his honest heart, shining in his eyes, and the gaze disconcerted her a little. She half rose from her seat, as if wishing to escape what she knew was coming, and then sank back again.

"Am I intruding? Do I disturb some charming reverie which is pleasing you?" he asked, almost timidly, for now that the great question had to be asked he felt nervous and uncertain as to the success of his hopes—those hopes that he had cherished for many years.

"No," she answered, with some slight embarrassment. "I was not in a reverie; I don't know what I was thinking about."

"May I guess?" he queried, studying all the grace of the handsome, well-poised head, with its wealth of raven hair, drawn straight past the beautiful shell-like ears, and knotted on the snowy neck.

"Oh yes, if you like. You would never guess the truth, though," she added, hurriedly, "for I was thinking of ghosts."

"Of ghosts!" he repeated, in astonishment.

"Yes, and if I were of a nervous turn of mind your noiseless approach might have alarmed me."

"I trust it did not do so!"

"No. I am not nervous. Still I might have thought it was the spectre from the octagonal chamber come to pay me a visit. He is a dangerous fellow, is he not?"

"The country folk about here who believe in such things say so."

"And what crime did he commit?"

"Murdered his wife."

"How dreadful—no, I mean how delightful. To live in a house where a real murder has been committed, and a real ghost walks, has always been my ambition," she declared.

"Then that ambition can be gratified now, if you wish," said Hugh, quietly, seizing the opportunity she had most unintentionally afforded him.

"I—I—don't know what you mean," she stammered, looking round wildly for a means of escape. The depths of the feminine mind is indeed difficult to fathom; and though in the morning after the interview with her father she had wished for the opportunity of refusing him, and showing him his mistake with regard to her feelings, she now dreaded the proposal, and would have fled if she could.

"Let me explain then, dear Lillian," he began, in tender, manly tones; "this house may be yours; if you will do me the honour to accept it, ghost and all. In fact, I have had that end in view for many months past—indeed, ever since I knew my uncle had left it to me. I am not clever at courtier-like speeches, I cannot pay compliments; but believe me to be speaking the truth when I say that you are dearer to me than anything else on earth."

Lillian hardly expected such a sweeping confession from the man before her, yet his straightforward wooing pleased her, though she maintained a strict silence.

"All my hopes centre in you; life, I feel, will be worthless to me without you. I have planned out a future which must be shared with you," he went on, "or be a perfect blank. I have never had a thought for any other woman. You have been, you are, all in all to me. I rejoice in my inheritance simply because it gives me power to ask for your hand, to plead for your love sooner than I could if I had only had my judgeship in India. The affection I feel for you is not an evanescent passion that will fade after a while. Time will but strengthen it, and no man will ever, can ever care for you more."

The wilful girl was softened by his words. She let him take her hand in his, and stood with downcast eyes listening, half her indignation appeased.

"Are my hopes presumptuous, Lillian? Have I been too bold in thinking we might pass the future together as man and wife? I trust not, dear. I trust I have not deceived myself in believing that the girlish affection you bore me in the old days has ripened into something warmer, and tenderer."

This last speech was a mistake. The wound caused by her father's words that morning was touched; her pride aroused, a sense of humiliation came over her.

He asked her out of pity, as he thought she could not live without him. Well, she would show him his mistake, and drawing her hand from his clasp, she said, coldly,—

"I think you are a little too bold, a little too presumptuous."

"Lillian," he exclaimed, fixing his beautiful eyes on her, full of reproach.

"Yes, I mean it. You have deceived yourself woefully in imagining that you are very dear to me. In future, when you intend to propose to a woman be sure she loves you first before you tell her so openly that she is dying of love for you," and with a gesture of scorn she swept out of the room, not deigning to cast another glance at him.

For a while Hugh stood motionless, robbed of the power of movement by the stunning shock of her refusal; then with a groan he groped his way to the table, and buried his head in his arms.

It was a bitter blow to bear. He loved her so well; she was the best part of his life, and now he must live it without her. There was only one face in the whole world that could charm him, only one voice that made melody in his ear; and the face and voice were lost to him, would go to make sunshine in another man's home. Love had taught him a cruel lesson, one hard to learn, impossible to forget; the future was a blank, with no hope, no happiness to make existence desirable.

He would have nothing but the memory of false hopes and bitter disappointment through all the long years that lay before him, a burden that was not pleasant to bear.

The drive back to the How was not parti-

cularly enjoyable to many members of the party. Hugh's blanched cheek told its tale to Mr. Lysaght, and for the first time since her birth he felt terribly angry with his daughter. Lillian was pale and subdued, and made no objection to Roche's suggestion that she should accompany him in his dogcart, which he had been canny enough to drive over in, thinking he might be able to induce her to go home alone with him, and thus have a good opportunity of putting the question, which he knew must be put before long, to stave off utter ruin.

He whipped up his high-stepping horse when he had tucked the rug round her, and soon the coach was far behind, which left him free to say what he wanted, and, somewhat to his astonishment, a tremulous "yes," was the answer to his pleading.

He had hardly expected to win the prize for one asking, and his joy at his easy success was exuberant, even to the extent of kissing his fair fiancée, who shrank away strangely from his embraces, and who, when she alighted from the dogcart, went straight up to her own room, did not appear again downstairs, and passed the evening shedding bitter tears, and kissing a photograph of Hugh Gordon's which he had given her three years before. A strange occupation, surely, for the promised bride of another man!

CHAPTER IV.

THAT night, when the men were all congregated in the smoking-room, enjoying the soothing weed, Roche approached Hugh, and sat down beside him, an uncommon occurrence, as the two men in general mutually avoided one another.

"I am in luck to-day," he began, with a sparkle in his dreamy eyes.

"Indeed!" said Gordon, lifting his heavy head, and looking up. "Backed the winning horse?"

"No, rather the winning mare," he replied, pointedly.

"The winning mare?"

"Yes. Congratulate me. I have won the prize we both strove for. Miss Lysaght has promised to be my wife."

A look of intense pain convulsed the younger man's handsome features for a moment, but recovering himself, he said quietly, with earnest sincerity,—

"I do congratulate you with all my heart. You have won a noble girl, and if she loves you, you ought to be the happiest man on earth."

"If she loves me," repeated the Colonel, "do you think she does not?"

"I suppose she must," replied the other, evasively, "or she would not have accepted you."

He filled his pipe again and puffed away in silence for a while, reflecting on sundry little stories that he had heard from time to time, as men will of each other, and which were decidedly not very creditable to the gallant Colonel.

Yet though he knew things, which, if told to their host, would inevitably prevent his giving his consent to the marriage, honour obliged him to be silent.

He could not disparage and try to blacken the man who was his rival, who had succeeded, where he, Hugh, had failed. That would be mean, dishonourable, but he writhed with agony as he thought of the life that lay before the woman he loved—a life full of misery and humiliation, which would be insupportable to her high spirit and wilful temperament.

She would be neglected for other women, snubbed, abused, her money taken to pay her husband's greedy and rapacious creditors, and she, perhaps, reduced to absolute want. How the thought stung him, like the fang of a deadly serpent, and he was powerless to save her!

No, stay; there was one way. He knew that the Colonel from his embarrassed circumstances, was only going to marry her for the sake of the money she would inherit, that filthy lucre for which so many men and women sell themselves into bondage, dreary slavery, which ends only with their lives; he probably knew nothing of Mr. Lysaght's intended marriage with a young woman.

This marriage would bring down Lillian's value as a monetary prize considerably, bring it down so low, perhaps, that it might not be worth Roche's while to marry her. It was worth trying the experiment of telling the Colonel there was a chance of his promised bride having a whole brood of little brothers and sisters, who would share her fortune with her. So taking a long pull at his meerschaum he began,—

"When is the happy day to be?"

"Eh! what?" said the Colonel, confusedly, looking up from a little calculation he was making on the back of an envelope as to how much it would take to keep Jeremiah Judah and Co. quiet until he had secured as absolutely his, the geese that would lay the golden eggs for him.

"Has the day for your marriage been fixed?"

"No, not yet. I only proposed this evening, as we were coming back from your place."

"Indeed!"

That little word from Hugh spoke volumes.

"That was all. Of course, we have had no time as yet to make any arrangements."

"Hardly. I suppose you will not wait very long!"

"No. Why do you ask, though?"

"Because I thought if you had made up your mind that the knot should be tied soon both weddings would probably take place together, and make a double affair of it."

"Both weddings! What do you mean?"

There was keen anxiety in the Colonel's dreamy eyes as he put the question.

"Haven't you heard about Mr. Lysaght?"

"No."

"He is going to be married next month to Miss Desmond."

"Oh, confound it!" broke from Roche's lips involuntarily; but recovering himself instantly he said with a smile that appeared to Hugh to be a ghastly travesty of mirth, "You don't say so."

"Yes; it is a fact."

"I must go and congratulate him, then," and rising, he sauntered off to their host, and stood chatting with him for a few moments, when he abruptly left the room, and sought the solitude of his own chamber.

He did not care to have Hugh's keen eyes on his face after the shock he had received, so he withdrew from the observation of the man he knew he had supplanted, and alone in his room cursed his ill-luck in not having heard of Mr. Lysaght's intended marriage sooner.

"I must get out of it," he cried. "It will never do to marry her and get a few paltry hundreds as her dower. I'd rather marry that Yorkshire widow I met in town last season, though she is fat, fair, and fifty; still her twenty thousand a year makes her quite handsome enough for me. The fair Lillian must excuse me. I'd rather not go. Still I must be cautious, and try to get her to do something that will give me a fair excuse for breaking the engagement, or I shall have her father and that fellow Gordon down on me," and with these thoughts the Colonel betook himself to his couch.

But little sleep visited his eyes. Before him seemed to stand his Israelitish creditors with threatening looks, and at last despairing of getting any rest he rose at day-dawn, and going to the stables knocked up a groom to saddle his horse, and went for a sharp gallop in hopes of dispersing the blues.

The party at the How were assembled round the breakfast table on his return, and some of the number looked as white and heavy-eyed as he did himself. Notably Hugh and Lillian, neither of whom had slept, remorse having been busy with her, and regret with him, driving away the white-winged dove—sleep.

"How did you enjoy your gallop?" inquired Lillian, as the Colonel took the seat which by common consent was left vacant at her side.

"Very much. It is a glorious morning. I suppose you will come out for a ride by-and-by?"

"Not for a ride," she replied. "I am going to drive into Glaston this afternoon. Will you come with me?"

"I shall be delighted to do so," he answered,

with great apparent delight, which, however, he was far from feeling, as he was wondering how soon he could decently get away from the How, and go to woo his Yorkshire widow, or rather her twenty thousand a-year, which would come in so nicely for paying his many and ever-increasing debts. "What are you going to drive?"

"My favourites—Bib and Tucker."

"What it is to be a favourite of yours!" he murmured, adding aloud, "the Arabs will be rather fresh, won't they? You have not driven them for some days."

"That will be all the better. I like to go along at a good pace."

"I don't think you ought to drive them, pussy," observed Mr. Lysaght, gravely. "They are too spirited for a woman's hand."

"Not for me, dad," she expostulated, indignantly, for she was a good whip, and was proud of her prowess.

"Rogers doesn't seem to like them. He thinks Tucker decidedly dangerous, and that if he bolts Bib will follow suit."

"Rogers is an old goose," she declared contemptuously, angry that her pets should be disparaged.

"He is far from that. I value his opinion highly, and have never known it to prove wrong."

"I think he is wrong with regard to my Arabs. They are such darlings, such beauties. I am sure there is not an atom of vice in them."

"I hope you will find it so, my dear," responded her father, seriously.

"Still, I should advise you not to think lightly of what the old man says. His knowledge of horseflesh is very extensive, and you may be sure he has some good reasons for saying what he does."

"No reason, I am sure, father, save that he would like to see me drive a pair of fat, waddling old cobs, that would trot two miles an hour, and that you know I never will do. Where would be the fun of driving animals of that sort? I like creatures full of life and spirit, that answer to the least touch of the rein, and I shall never drive any other kind;" with which announcement, given in a very determined manner, Miss Lysaght rose from the table, and, getting a wrap, sauntered out with some of the other ladies and passed the time till luncheon visiting the stables, and the kennels, and the pheasantry.

After lunch she came down equipped for her afternoon expedition, and found Roche waiting for her in the hall.

"Is the phaeton here?" she asked.

"Yes. Bib and Tucker have just come to a standstill after no end of capering and curvetting."

"A good gallop will take all that out of them," she said, confidently, as she mounted into the phaeton, and took the reins from Rogers, who ventured to say,—

"Don't use the whip, missy. They won't stand it. They'll bolt, certain sure, if you do. They're main fresh."

"I can manage them," she answered, lightly; and as she spoke Hugh came hurriedly down the steps and laid his hand on the reins.

"Miss Lysaght," he said, earnestly, addressing her for the first time since she had left him in the library at the Hall, "let me beg of you not to drive these animals to-day; they are dangerous."

"Nonsense!" she replied, curtly, turning her head away that she might not encounter the glance of those blue eyes. "I am not afraid."

"You are risking your life!" he cried, with terrible anxiety, which he was powerless to conceal or repress. "Colonel Roche," he added, "will you not prevent her doing this reckless thing?"

"Certainly not," replied the Colonel, coolly, as he adjusted the rug over his knees. "I never attempt to interfere with ladies. I know the uselessness of it. Better let them have their own way."

"Not, surely, when their way means death?" he expostulated.

"Mr. Gordon, you are detaining us," she said, frigidly, as the young groom, Ted, got up. "Be good enough to take your hand off the reins. I am going to start," and she struck the horses a smart cut, at which they reared, dragging the

ribbons from Hugh's grasp, and then started off at a terrific pace.

The Colonel felt a little uneasy at first, though he was no coward; but after a time the Arabs settled down into an easy trot, which left their fair driver free to chat to her companion, which she did, striving to make herself agreeable to the man she was going to promise to "love, honour, and obey," and to chase away the black cloud that lowered on his brow.

She did not succeed; and after they left Glaston, on their homeward way, conversation faltered somewhat and she fell into a reverie, and was not on the alert, as she ought to have been.

The reins were slack, and as they passed the Yellowfield preserves a pheasant rose almost from under the horses' hoofs.

With a snort and a cry of terror Tucker lowered his head, seized the bit in his teeth, laid back his ears, and bolted like the wind, carrying Bib with him in his first impetuous rush, and then being joined by him in the mad race.

On, on they tore—past hedges and ditches—past wood and field. On, on with untiring speed.

It was in vain the Colonel seized the reins and tried to wrench their heads round. They took no more notice of his efforts than if he had tried to guide them with a piece of silk.

"Sit still—sit still!" he cried, with one swift look at his companion's ashen face. "Don't move! Cling on firmly! They must tire themselves out soon. All will be well."

But it did not seem likely that all would be well unless their wild career was checked, for they had left the beaten track and were bounding over the common heading towards the chalk-pits, down one of which they must inevitably fling themselves, dealing death and destruction to those in the phaeton unless they could be stopped.

"Great heavens! what can I do?" muttered Roche through his clenched teeth, as they neared the first pit. "We are lost!"

But as he spoke, and gave up all hope, a man, who had been lying face downwards in the gorse, sprang up, and throwing himself before the horses with a herculean effort, turned them aside, stopping them for a minute, which was time enough for the Colonel and the groom to spring out and assist Miss Lysaght to alight; then he stepped back, but not quickly enough, for as he released their heads they sprang forward, knocking him down, trampling him under their iron hoofs, and tore on—on till they reached the pit, when, with a horrid crash, horses and phaeton disappeared!

With a piercing shriek, Lillian flung herself beside the wounded man, and lifting his blood-stained head on to her knee, kissed the brow that was gashed by the iron hoofs, staunching the blood with her handkerchief, and called upon him loudly to look up and speak to her. Hugh Gordon gave no response to her pleadings. His eyes remained shut, there was a deathlike pallor on his cheek, and believing he was dead, dead through saving her, with another shriek she fell forward senseless on his breast.

It was near midnight when she recovered her senses, and found herself lying in her own bed at the How.

"What has happened?" she asked the maid who sat by her side, passing her hand confusedly over her forehead. "Ah! I remember," she added, with a shudder, "poor Hugh, Mr. Gordon—how—how is he? Is he dead?"

"Law, no, miss. He ain't dead."

"Thank Heaven for that," she ejaculated, fervently. "And is he much injured—much hurt?"

"I think he is out about a bit. Gashed like."

"Is he conscious?"

"No, miss."

"Help me to dress at once," she said imperatively, and, despite the expostulations of the woman, she got up, and when dressed went to Hugh's room.

He was lying very still, looking like death, with his bandaged head; and struck with remorse and repentance at the mischief she had done, she fell on her knees by the couch, and prayed that his life might be spared. For days it seemed doubtful that he could recover; at last the

change came, and he journeyed slowly back to life and health.

A fortnight after the accident Lillian received a letter from the Colonel, who had left the How on the plea of "urgent business," to say that he released her from her engagement to him, as, after seeing the fond way in which she had embraced Mr. Gordon, he could only arrive at the conclusion that he, Roche, was not the man she loved, or wished to marry.

"I am so glad—oh, I am so glad," she cried, joyfully, when she finished reading it. "I am free now to make amends to my poor darling, if he will let me."

"How is Hugh this morning?" asked Lillian of her father, some three or four weeks later, when they met at breakfast.

"Pretty well."

"Only pretty well?"

"That is all. The wounds have healed, and the broken ribs mended, but he seems to have little strength, and to be listless and dull. You had better go and see if you can cheer him, Puss."

"I, dad!" she faltered.

"Yes; try and amuse him."

"Yes," and slowly she went towards the room he occupied—slowly and almost reluctantly, for she had never been alone with him since the day she had refused him, and had avoided him, thinking he might not care for her society, while really he craved for it as the flowers do for sunlight.

"At last!" he murmured, as he saw her enter.

"Is there anything I can do for you—to amuse?" she asked, confusedly.

"Yes," he replied with the utmost composure, for he figured well from her blushes and confusion. "Come and sit here," pointing to a footstool at his feet, "and talk to me."

"Do you really wish me to stay with you?" she queried, eagerly.

"Yes, most certainly I do. I have a great deal to say to you."

"And I also."

"Well, supposing you begin."

"I—I—want to ask you, Hugh, to forgive me for the way I acted towards you. I didn't mean it, indeed."

"Didn't mean what?" he asked, coolly.

"To—to—be unkind to you."

"To say 'no' when you meant 'yes,' dear?" he asked, tenderly.

"Yes," she answered, and the next moment she was hiding her blushing face on his breast, and he was whispering tender endearments into her ear, asking the old, old question over again, and getting a reply that fully satisfied him; for Lillian knew her own heart at last, knew that it had left her keeping, and that she could find no happiness in life apart from Hugh Gordon.

[THE END.]

ALL persons who have climbed great heights are aware that respiration becomes more or less difficult, the heart beats either very irregularly or with great rapidity, and nausea, exhaustion and other unpleasant sensations are experienced. Just what is the highest limit to which man can ascend and live has frequently been questioned. A scientist reached 15,000 feet above sea level without great trouble. The idea suggested itself—could he not create a rarefied atmosphere by a mechanical process? He prepared a very large pneumatic air chamber and rigged it with all the necessary appliances. He shut himself in, then the air was rarefied to a degree which would probably be found at the height of 24,000 feet above sea level, then he became so distressed that the experiment had to stop. As Mt. Everest is a mile higher than this simulated altitude, we may naturally conclude that unless there are means provided for assisting respiration, feet will never tread the height on this globe.

"THE HUMAN HAIR: Its Restoration and Preservation." A Practical Treatise on Baldness, Greyiness, Superfluous Hair, &c. 40 pages. Post-free six stamps, from Dr. HORN, Hair Specialist, Bournemouth.

A FORTUNATE SPECULATION.

DR. HOFFMANN, of Frankfort, Germany, the author of "Shock-headed Peter," tells us a good joke how he happened to make it.

One Christmas he had been searching high and low for a suitable picture-book for his two-year-old boy, but in vain. At last he purchased a blank copy-book and told his wife he was going to make a picture-book for the boy—"one he can understand, and in which the morals—'be obedient,' 'be clean,' 'be industrious,'—are brought home in a manner which impresses the young child."

Dr. Hoffmann knew nothing of drawing, but he set to work and produced the gruesome picture of all the naughty boys and girls which everybody knows. His child was delighted, and when some of his circle of literary friends saw it they urged him to have it published before the boy spoiled it, and Dr. Loning, the publisher, said he would bring it out.

"Well," said Dr. Hoffmann, "give me eighty guineas (five guineas), and try your fortune. Don't make it expensive, and don't make it too strong. Children like to tear books as well as to read them, and nursery-books ought not to be heirlooms. They ought to last only a time." An edition of fifteen hundred was quickly sold, and now one hundred and seventy-five editions have appeared in Germany and forty in England, and it has been translated into Russian, Swedish, Danish, Dutch, French, Italian and Portuguese.

THINKING OVER IT TWICE.

WE are such impressionable beings that neither young men nor maidens should, as a rule, do anything before thinking twice over it.

Sweethearting, into which maidenhood and adolescent manliness glide as naturally as ducks take to water, needs this sort of carefulness much more than anything else.

It is easy to take a situation, to change the place of residence, to build up a scheme, or to do a dozen other serious matters.

If failure comes, failure can be borne. Sweethearting is generally irrevocable. The careless kisses and pretty walks glide on to marriage.

Once afoot on the Niagara of courtship, people rush down a current which is irrefutable. And then the rude awakening comes. Little temper and little faults creep in through the cracks in an ill-assorted union.

Household cares prevent the wife from being as tidy as she once was, and business frets rub the husband the wrong way.

Nobody is perfect, but forbearance and love do much to soften the irritable, hard edges of existence.

If people whose every taste and hope is dissimilar, have chosen each other blindly for the co-partnership which is for better or for worse, then the rest of life is only the latter, never sees a glimpse of the former, and frequently ends in social disaster.

"Think over it twice." A party leads to an introduction and a Sunday walk. An introduction to mutual friends follows.

Then a proposal and engagement. And all this time Cupid has been playing his deadly game with people who have seen each other only in their Sunday clothes and company manners.

When the young couple are face to face with a household care or two which can squall all night, and sometimes do so—when the fresh-complexioned girl gets pale and wan—when things go awry at the counting-house and there is a wet washing-day at home, company manners fly away.

It is never too late to think over it twice while everything has to be done. To think over it twice when everything has been done is to try to wrestle with the laws of gravitation. When all is settled it is too late to attempt to begin again at the start.

THE BACHELOR'S BARGAIN.

AN amusing story is told of how a confirmed old bachelor, who combined with his bachelorhood the qualities of the bibliomane, came finally to marry. It appears that the lonely old bookworm employed an old servant to take care of his rooms. Upon her fell the task of arranging and dusting the library, and she soon came to be smitten with a taste for reading. She began to spend all her earnings in buying books, and, strange to say, they were old books that she bought and read. One afternoon she came in with a parcel of volumes picked up from the bookstalls. Out of curiosity, the master turned over the leaves of her treasures, and we can well imagine the more or less supercilious smile that played upon his countenance as he thought of the humorous phase of this old woman turned bibliophile. Suddenly his face lighted up.

"How much did you give for this?" said he, picking up a volume with great eagerness.

"Fifteen-pence," was the answer.

"Fifteen-pence? Why, this is worth a thousand pounds," cried the collector. He reflected, when too late, how stupid he had been to speak, and in vain tried to recall his words. "I will give you fifty shillings for it," said he.

"Sir, you have just told me it was worth a thousand pounds!"

The old creature was not to be cheated, and the bookworm, at last offered one hundred pounds. It was a first edition, extremely rare, of "Montaigne's Essays." He was a good buyer, but his servant would not take a fraction less than one thousand pounds, which sum was more than he could afford. That night the connoisseur dreamt of Montaigne. At last he could resist no longer. At any price he must have the old book.

"This woman takes good care of me; she appears to be smitten with the same passion for old books," said he to himself next. "Why should I not marry her? I should then have my Montaigne."

So he went to her the following day and "popped the question."

She accepted him, and they were married.

The clever old dame brought him the book as a dowry.

DIANA'S DIAMONDS.

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CHAPTER XLV.

THE few weeks for which I had been invited to share Hugh's loss had almost elapsed. It was now the middle of August, the very height of the camp season.

Grand reviews, luncheon parties, tournaments, and dances, followed one another thick and fast. At the first hint of my departure (which hint took the shape of perusing a Bradshaw), Hugh was seriously distressed.

"You need not take everything I say quite literally. I meant you to stay as long as you pleased, of course."

Yes, so he said now; but it certainly did not give me that impression in his note of invitation.

"You surely may as well wait till the camp breaks up the end of September. The air of the place suits you down to the ground. I know it's not very luxurious quarters, and if it were winter it would be another thing; but I really think you could put in another six weeks very fairly."

"And you wish me to stay!"

"Am I not saying so? Considering all things, we are getting along pretty well, and if you were to go now it would look odd; and we may as well make a good job of this keeping-up appearances when we are about it."

His words were not nearly as eager or pressing as his manner.

After a few more reasons for my prolonging my visit being stated, I, with assumed reluctance, laid down my Bradshaw, and said I "would think about it; but I had brought over such a small stock of clothes."

"That is easily remedied. Write to Mrs. Parish, and her maid will pack up and send off the rest of your things. You might as well drop her a line to-day."

"Of course. If it was winter it would be different," I said, as I looked out of the window over the short grass. "But the air here now is so deliciously bracing I don't like to tear myself away."

"There is no occasion for you to tear yourself away, as you call it. Remember there is the General's ball on the 20th. All the viceregal people are coming down from Dublin. Then, on the 29th, there is the military tournament, and on the 1st of September we are to be presented with our new colours. You could not turn your back on all this, and go and vegetate at Brayfield, could you?"

So between the air and the approaching dances we made out a capital excuse for my remaining on, but the real and secret reason of my staying was that I liked to stay; and presumably, for all his friendly formality and the wall of ice that stood between us, Hugh liked to have me. I was a lively, pretty companion.

I rode, and danced, and dressed well. When he came home I greeted him with smiles. He on his side repeated for my benefit the latest camp and regimental jokes; and Peggy, I am sure, was frequently astounded by our peals and peals of laughter.

Yes, Hugh was considered a lucky man as the husband of the lovely and charming Mrs. Halford!

People little guessed at our real life. Even Ada Rose never dreamt that we were not now on as good terms as herself and her beloved George. She never dreamt that I had come over for show, to stop the mouth of Mrs. Grundy. That I really had forfeited my husband's confidence—that he had repudiated me as his wife—and that I was bound hand and foot by the chains of circumstantial evidence, and the heavy manacles of my mother's secret.

No! To everyone we seemed as gay as we were good-looking. We walked, and talked, and laughed, returning up the green sward from afternoon amusements almost as if we were not married, Hugh carrying my bat and tennis-shoes with as lover-like politeness as if I were still "on promotion."

We had plenty to say to one another about other people and things. I was always a chatterbox, but we never, never spoke about ourselves—our married life at Southsea—of our little child, who lay in Brayfield churchyard. Indeed, sometimes the past seemed so unreal that I found it hard to grasp the fact that Hugh was my husband at all. His politeness was overwhelming, so different to those good old days, when he smoked when he pleased, threw newspapers about, never dreamt of jumping up to open the door for me, and had even—yes, actually sent me to scour the rooms for his gloves, cap, and meerschaum!

Those days, alas! were no more. Now when I entered he sprang up as if I were a stranger, and sought to get me a chair. He never smoked indoors, he never sent me a message, and for the smallest thing he said, "I beg your pardon, pray excuse me. May I trouble you, and if you please!"

Mrs. Horne and I were on terms of armed neutrality; she could not endure me, and I could not bear her. We were very civil outwardly, but if ever she saw her way to dealing me a nasty thrust she never spared me. In the art of saying disagreeable things with a smile on her face, and a kind of playful manner, she had no rival. In appearance she was small and petite, with black hair, very good dark blue eyes, with long black lashes—eyes that did immense service. She had a short, rather hooked nose, a wide mouth, and a pointed chin. The description does not sound alluring, but between her eyes and her coquettish air, her white teeth, and her trim little figure, Mrs. Horne contrived to pass herself off as one of the belles of the camp. She danced divinely, she was wittily malicious, and often surrounded by a posse of men, eagerly listening, with faces all on the grin, to Mrs. Horne's clever dissection of other ladies. She had nick-names for us all more or less amusing.

Since my arrival her circle had greatly diminished—diminished almost to vanishing point. If my tongue was not so sharp, or my lips, so—so—shall I say eloquent? I was her superior in looks. I had the advantage of youth—real, not assumed. I was a capital horsewoman, and looked my best in the saddle; and I was one of the best tennis-players in camp.

Moreover, since my arrival Hugh was no longer at Mrs. Horne's beck and call; it was useless for her to say, "Hugh, are you walking home my way? Hugh, Tom is on a court-martial; come and take me out for a ride!" Now it was always "No, I cannot; I am going with Diana." I knew Mrs. Horne would do me an ill turn if she could, and I was prudent. I always received her sharpest thrusts with smiles, and affected to suppose that she was joking. This demureness drove her frantic, especially as lookers-on and listeners were keenly alive to her little game; and my victories were secretly, though warmly applauded, especially by the ladies, who had all suffered many things of Mrs. Horne. However, one day, when we were sitting out on the green, after tennis, four or five of the regiment, and four or five outriders—Hugh was not present—she discovered the joint in my armour.

I have already mentioned Hugh's charger, but although he rode it occasionally when he was acting aide-de-camp for the General, it had no claim to this name. In the first place, a captain in the line has no right to a charger, as everyone knows—no one under the rank of major. And, secondly, "Scatterbrains" had never been broken in the riding-school, and was really a beautiful thoroughbred chestnut, that Hugh had bought out of a training stable on the Curragh, as it would not stand severe training, but was a first-class lightweight hunter, and the making of a remarkable steeplechaser. I had never ridden him, nor asked to ride him, nor been offered him as a mount; his tightly tucked-in tail, ears laid flat, and rolling eye were sufficient indications of his temper. On this particular evening, conversation turned on riding—ladies' riding especially. Lady riders and their steeds were freely canvassed, and one of our officers said,—

"I think that girl who is staying with the chaplain's wife is the best rider, present company—looking at me—always excepted."

"I think," said a constant champion and satellite of Mrs. Horne's, a Captain Cook—a man with a red moustache, prominent teeth, and wolfish eyes—"that Miss Vokes, the chaplain's niece, is the best lady rider on the Curragh, bar none"—and he also looked at me.

Mrs. Horne giggled, and said,—

"Oh, my dear Captain Cook, it is very rude of you to say this before Mrs. Halford. Mrs. Halford's riding is considered very showy."

To be called a showy rider was of all things gall and wormwood to me, who never, never, thanks to excellent early intuition, went in for bullying my horse—a showing off, as it is called.

"Mrs. Halford rides nicely," said Mrs. Halford, who returned Captain Cook; "but she has not, I am sure, Miss Vokes' power of managing a hot-tempered horse, although she has a much prettier seat. No doubt she has not had Miss Vokes' experience!"

Hear him, oh! ye shades of my former fiery, desert-born steed!

"I must say," broke in one of our officers, "that it strikes me as being awfully funny to hear you and Mrs. Horne calmly discussing Mrs. Halford's riding before her face."

"Oh, I am sure I don't mind," I said, with as much composure as usual.

"No, of course you don't, dear," rejoined Mrs. Horne, sweetly. "When we talk of good riders we could not leave you out, but I am sure that you and Miss Vokes' style of riding is different. She is ungraceful—very—and you look perfect on horseback; but when it comes to holding and sticking on a half-broken brute like that very horse of Major Martin's, I think she is your superior."

"Yes, he is a nasty brute," said Captain Cook.

"I know a much nastier, and that's Captain Halford's chestnut. Even Miss Vokes would be nowhere on him," said Mrs. Horne. "He is

downright unsafe. I even feel quite wretched when I see Captain Halford riding him."

"I am sure it is very kind of you, Mrs. Horne. I am afraid I scarcely can reciprocate the compliment, for I do not even know the colour of the horse your husband rides."

"Oh, poor Tim rides as little as possible, although he is in the cavalry; but Hugh is a capital horseman, and he quite agrees with me about Miss Vokes. He says she has such nerve. He told me she was the only woman he ever saw whom he would allow to back the chestnut, and he would have offered it to her—only—"

She stopped and laughed, and looked round her.

"Only what?" I asked, politely.

"Only—but he said it in confidence to me—and so mind you don't repeat it."

"Yes, of course; but I am dying to hear what it is, Mrs. Horne. Only—"

"Only you would not like it! Was it not nice of him?" and she went off into peals of affected laughter, and rising, with a smile, and a coquettish wave of her hand, she and her cavalier took their departure.

"Odious creature!" cried Ada. "I wonder you tolerate her, Di. Why do you ask her up to tennis?"

"I never ask her, she comes; she does not wait to be asked."

"She is a regular firebrand," said Captain Rose, "and hated in the Lancashire like poison."

"It amuses me to hear her talk of riding," said another officer. "As to Miss Vokes, Mrs. Halford, you could give her three stone and a beating, in sporting parlance. She is bold with the courage of ignorance; but just wait till she gets one or two rattling falls. She could no more ride Scatterbrains than she could ride a zebra. He requires temper, nerve, experience, and the very lightest of hands. No lady could ride him, because she could never hold him. Be sure of one thing, that we all stand by you, Mrs. Halford! not a soul can touch your riding. You were born to witch the world with matchless horsemanship!"

I was determined to "witch the world" the very next day; but I kept my resolve to myself.

It was Wednesday, and there was to be a particularly grand review and march past of all the troops on the Curragh.

The Viceroy and party and the Duke were coming down by special train, and were afterwards to be entertained at the General's pavilion.

It was a very busy morning with Hugh, and indeed with everyone. He snatched his breakfast hastily at eight o'clock, for all the troops were to be under arms at nine, and upon the ground before ten.

Ere he mounted his pony to gallop off to barracks he said,—

"Oh! by the way, Diana, how are you coming down with Mrs. Rose? The march past will be close to this—there, in the hollow. I advise you to walk, or to send down the victoria, and have it drawn up close to the flag-staff, and have the horse taken out. You will see everything capitally. As for us—goodness knows how many miles we shall be marched and counter-marched before this blessed review is over, and I believe it's going to be a piping hot day."

"I shall look out for you," I said, following him to the door. "You will be company number four, and on the right hand side!"

"Yes, if I am not doing galloper. I can't tell yet."

"But what will you ride—Scatterbrains?"

"No, rather not; a day like this would drive him mad. The General's brown, if any. Good-bye!" and with a wave of his hand he cantered off.

No sooner had he done so than I called Harris, and with my most off-hand air said,—

"Harris, tell the groom to put my saddle on the chestnut horse, and to have it up here at ten o'clock."

"What chestnut horse, ma'am?"

"Scatterbrains."

"Excuse me, ma'am," laying down the tray; "but I dare—"

"But," I interrupted, "you are here, Harris, to take my orders, and not to make objections." So saying I walked away.

Peggy, poor trusting soul! had such confidence in my riding, and such a conviction that I could master any animal, that when she saw a bright chestnut horse dancing up to the door with my saddle on its back she did not even make a single remark, beyond that "that horse of the Captain's was a beautiful beast, but that he had a terrible wicked eye of his own."

CHAPTER XLVI.

SCATTERBRAINS WAS SO amazed at my audacity that he allowed me to mount him without the smallest trouble, Harris and John, the groom, meanwhile standing and looking on with respectful gravity, as I stroked his neck, arranged my reins, and squared myself on the saddle.

Harris tried a final expostulation ere I departed.

"Beg pardon, ma'am, but this ere business is your own responsibility. You will stand between me and the Captain if he is like to kill me!"

"Yes, yes, Harris; you need not be afraid," I answered, as I rode away at a kind of floating walk down the hillside, across the valley, and up the opposite slope.

So far so good.

Scatterbrains snorted a little, shook his head, and bore upon his bridle, and I said to myself,—

"Just wait, my dear sir, till we get well away from camp, and I will give you a gallop that will astonish you."

And I did. I set him going very gently, and let him increase the pace to his top speed. On the Curragh you can gallop miles and miles without meeting the least obstacle beyond sheep and furze bushes, with nothing under your horse's hoofs but the short elastic turf.

Frankly speaking, Scatterbrains was running away with me. I had no power over him whatever; no use to drag his mouth and tire my arms. I had good wind, and good nerve, so I just sat on his back and let him go. We flew—we seemed to be cutting the air, like an express bullet.

Gradually he made a circle, and turned his head towards the Camp, and as he tore along madly I noticed that at every stride we were overtaking a group of mounted officers—numerous officers, with numerous cocked hats—in short, the staff, who were coming up from Newbridge.

Gradually we came up with them, and at thirty yards' distance shot past them, going down hill; and here at the foot of the hill I saw what brought my heart into my mouth—and no wonder.

Right in front of me—and at my headlong pace there was no evading it, stood the magazine in an enclosure, surrounded by a high *chevaux de frise* of tall iron spikes arranged crossways, so that the top was literally bristling with what looked like a row of bayonets.

This railing was fully four feet high, and once in it we must clear it at the other side. To miss it—to be impaled—would be death; and, in spite of everything life was still sweet, and my veins ran ice when I took in the awful fate awaiting me.

One thing certain, it would be all over in a minute or two. I cast a rapid, mental glance at Hugh. Would he be sorry? Would he ever know the truth? A loud shout from the staff met my ears.

They saw my danger, but I could not avoid it. I was rushing in it like a tornado. I had the presence of mind to steady Scatterbrains as we came at the palings, but we went at them so fast they almost seemed to come at us. Flash! we were over! Another bound, and we had left the enclosure behind us, and now I had nothing to do but keep his head towards the hill.

He was going a little in hand now, as he passed two regiments drawn up in line—then a battery of horse artillery—then a cavalry regiment.

He flew over a wide, stone-lined ditch, known

as the "camp-drain," and now began to breast the hill in earnest; and here it was my turn—and I did not spare him—puffing and blowing, and streaming with perspiration and foam.

I pulled him up with ease beside a party of people on foot, among whom I recognised several friends—Ada, Rose and Mrs. Horne.

"Oh Diana!" cried Ada, tremulously. "How could you? I have been in torture! I saw you leap that awful place in and out by the magazine. I am trembling so that I can hardly stand. My knees are giving way under me!"

Various other people surrounded me, and lavished praises on my hands—my nerve, my courage.

Mrs. Horne stood in the background trying to think of something nasty to say, and failing to find speech she was contented for once. The triumph of the hour was mine. Years of galloping in the jungle had given me endurance that it would have been hard to match.

My steed was blown and hot, and had had about enough of it. I was as cool, to all appearances, as when I had started, and I had a feeling that I was capable of managing Scatterbrains with ease for the rest of the day. He would not bolt again.

At this moment the first gun gave the signal for the commencement of the review, and he got at once upon his hind legs, but I did not mind. I was used to rearing, and refused to tumble off, as he evidently expected.

After this he lashed out and left, and scattered my little circle, and then he calmed down, and suffered me to follow Miss Vokes, who, in a dowdy grey habit, mounted on a bay horse, was making for the staff, who were posted on a distant hill. The great thing at a review is to keep behind the staff. They see everything, and are in the thick of the action.

As we rode towards the hill we passed an officer galloping down *versus à terre*. As we came close I saw it was Hugh. Of course he could not stop, but I noticed that his face was as white as death, and he shook his head at me in a significant manner.

"He does not like your riding that horse, Mrs. Halford; and, indeed, I don't wonder!" said Miss Vokes, as we trotted up the hill in the rear of the General and staff—not to mention the Viceroy, who was also there, mounted on a fat, black cob.

As we took up a modest position in the background every eye was turned on us, and especially on me; and the General sent over a mutual friend to beg I would come forward, and take a better place, and I did; also my follower, Miss Vokes.

For the remainder of the day I rode with the staff, and alongside the Viceroy, an elderly gentleman, who was amazed at my nerve.

"We saw that runaway of yours. You passed us," said the General, "when you made for the magazine! I thought it was all over with you, and I was sorry for Halford. I asked him who the lady was, and he could hardly speak. I am afraid you stole a march on him in riding that hot-blooded chestnut!"

"Yes, I did," I admitted, frankly.

"Well, we will keep you under our eye for the rest of the day. No more charging *chevaux de frise*. You seem to manage that horse wonderfully. I don't suppose another lady in Ireland would have sat him over those two frightful jumps."

And so it came to pass that I rode at the right hand of Her Majesty's representative all that long hot morning and only felt a little behind when he stood at the saluting post during the march past.

Here was a triumph! The only drawback to my bliss was that Hugh was angry. He had not taken the least notice of me, though I noticed that he kept as close to me as possible.

Scatterbrains plunged and reared, and tore at his bit, and made himself very remarkable for a time, and the *feu de joie* nearly sent him off again; but after a while he settled down, and by the end of the field day was as well behaved as any horse on the ground.

I received an invitation to the *déjeuner* at the Pavilion, and rode home alone, for Hugh was

still on sentry; however, he was not long after me. Scatterbrains had just been led away, and I had removed my hat and gloves, when he came galloping up, dismounted, and sent his horse away with an orderly, and came clanking into the hut. Harris was putting the luncheon on the table when he entered. I saw Harris glance up. I knew he expected that I should "catch it," but he was disappointed for once. Hugh never opened his lips until we were quite alone, and I sat waiting for the storm to burst, as I toyed with some cold chicken I did not much care what he said. I was very tired now, and felt deadly faint. The reaction had set in, and I felt that I was not half as capable of tough endurance as I had been in the old days.

"Diana," he said, "I think you are mad! What possessed you to ride the chestnut?"

I made no answer.

"I declare when I saw a lady flash by us near the Newbridge road, going straight for the magazine—a determined runaway—I felt quite sick, and I'm not generally squeamish; but the thought of those iron spikes, and the horse impaled, and then probably falling on the top of her, was quite enough to make one feel queer, especially as we were powerless. And when I recognised 'Scatterbrains' and saw that it was you, I—I—shall never forget how I felt! I've not got over it yet," pouring out a glass of sherry with a hand that trembled visibly.

"Then you would have been sorry if I had been killed?" I said, helping myself to a biscuit.

"Don't talk nonsense," very sharply. "What put it into your head to ride the chestnut?"

"You did—you and Mrs. Horne."

"Please explain."

"They were talking of good riders yesterday—oh! a number of people, Captain Rose will tell you, and Mrs. Horne said I could not ride nearly as well as Miss Vokes, so did Captain Cook, and she said you were of the same opinion."

"She was raving!"

"No. She said that you said Miss Vokes was the only lady you knew who could ride Scatterbrains, and that you would offer her a mount on him, only that I would not like it. So I ordered the chestnut this morning, just to let you see that I could ride him as well as Miss Vokes."

"And risked your life to gratify that woman's spite! Diana, I am amazed at you. How could you believe her! Is it likely that I would speak of you in such a way? I never opened my lips to her on the subject of Annie Vokes, and I never spoke of your riding to her but once, and that was before you came, and I then told her that you were a better rider than I was myself. As to Scatterbrains, I never mentioned him at all."

"So it was all an invention!"

Yes! and an invention which, thanks to your credulity, nearly cost you your life. I am very angry with you, Diana; I have been in torture for the last three hours; my hand is shaking as if I had the ague still. You look pretty well done up, too."

I was. I rose, staggered to the open window to get a little air, and then I remembered no more till I came to, and found that I was stretched on the sofa, with Peggy in attendance, my habit body open, and a damp feel about my face and hair. Hugh was evidently much concerned, and was receiving a lecture from Peggy.

"It's all your doing; you make her do too much, and she is not fit for it—riding and dancing, and walking, and tennis playing. There's no moderation at all; and here she went out at ten o'clock on that yellow horse of yours, and he has been galloping like a mad thing about the Curragh for four good hours, and has the arms fairly dragged out of her. You are older than she is, and ought to look after her, and show more sense."

Hugh made no defence, and Peggy was much surprised to hear later that I had ridden the chestnut without his leave, and that he had been very much vexed about it. A little surprise awaited me the next day. It was to hear that to place temptation beyond my reach, Scatterbrains had been sold to an English dealer.

"Did you mention that he carried a lady?" I asked, rather mischievously.

"No, and he is never likely to carry another. He has been bought as a steeplechaser. The dealer saw his performances yesterday, and bought him on the strength of them. He has given a good price for him, and I shall be able to replace him with two others. I know of a very nice brown thoroughbred that would carry you beautifully."

"Never mind," I answered, rather ungraciously. "It is not worth while to buy a horse for me for all the time that I shall be here."

CHAPTER XLVII.

Nothing is more acceptable to soldiers' wives than good cast-off clothes; and there were two or three in Hugh's company that, only for my assistance, would have been almost in rags—private's wives with large families, a husband who took his glass and small pay.

Hugh now and then mentioned one or two very bad cases, and such would come to me for relief in the way of money, clothes, and nourishing food, but he never allowed me to visit them in their own quarters.

One specially wretched creature, whose husband was married without leave, and who was not on the strength, gave me a call "by the Captain's orders" one afternoon when I happened to be at home. I was reserving myself for a grand ball that evening.

She was a decent, prudent-looking young woman, and stood at the back door looking timidly at Harris, who, being a well-to-do bachelor, had no sympathy with her/whatever. As I happened to be passing I beckoned her into the drawing-room.

Hugh was writing in the dining-room, and there she related her pitiful tale. She came of decent folks, and had an excellent situation as a sewing-maid, and, in spite of all that could be said to her, had run away with Private Stokes, who had spent his furlough in the village, and had dazzled her with his smart air, his red coat, and his luxuriant moustache.

"Oh, ma'am," she cried, "but I rue the day I married him! Here I am, in a little room in Newbridge, half starved, and keeping myself with selling my good clothes, then doing a bit of needle-work, and now weeding turnips at sixpence a day! I borrowed this bonnet and shawl to come out in, and I have scarce a shoe to my foot. I was not reared like this, and I know that I am not fit to come before the Captain's lady."

"Oh, yes, you are," I said. "Sit down; you look very tired."

"The Captain is very good to me, ma'am. He gave me a sovereign, and paid the doctor as well when my baby was born. He is a good gentleman to us women, however strict he is with the men; and if they are all like Stokes he has a hard time."

"And what has become of your baby?"

"I have it here"—unfolding her shawl—"it's no size at all, and it's three months' old."

Nor was it. It was, if anything, smaller than mine, and when she discovered its tiny pinched face and fairy hands, I felt a kind of lump in my throat that nearly choked me.

"If I only had a decent gown on my back, and a few little things for it I would work my way home, and never wish to set eyes on Stokes again. As it is I am ashamed, for I used to hold my head very high in the village. Oh, I had offers, though my face was my fortune—and I said 'No' to them all for Stokes. Oh, the black day that ever I set eyes on him!"

"Hush! Don't speak like that. No matter what he is he is your husband and your child's father. No one else can be the same to you."

"Oh, dear young lady—that is a lady, and married to a real gentleman—you don't know the troubles of married life, nor the affliction some has to put up with."

"Oh, no, of course—how could I!"

"Will you let me hold the baby?" I said, to turn the subject.

"Indeed and welcome. You will find him

light enough. Do you think, ma'am, there is any lady you know that has one or two cast-off flannels, or a daygown, or a little hood they would give me. I know you yourself never had a child; and, indeed, if you had I would not make so bold, after all the Captain's kindness."

I now remembered that in the box sent over by Mrs. Parish there was a parcel that she, not knowing the contents, had despatched unopened. It contained nearly all my baby clothes. I said,—

"If you will take baby again, and wait a few minutes, Mrs. Stokes, I will see what I can find you," and in a short time I returned with the parcel, out of which I selected a quilted hood, some flannels, a couple of frocks, and an embroidered shawl.

"See here, Mrs. Stokes, you can have these," I said; "they belonged to my baby, who is dead, and you are very welcome to them. I won't detain you any longer," I added, when she had expressed her delight and gratitude.

I felt that, between this small creature, now adorned in a familiar hood and shawl, and the many little articles I had turned over in the parcel, my tears were coming fast.

I was glad when she left me, and I went and sat down, and laid my arms on the table, and had a really good cry—quite a long, luxurious cry.

Then Peggy came in, and laid her hand on my shoulder. I knew she was going to rate me as usual, and without lifting up my head, I said,—

"Don't, Peggy. I must cry sometimes. You know nothing about this; you have never had a child! To think of that woman's baby being left—left a burden to her—and mine—"

And then I lifted up my head, and saw that it was not Peggy at all, but Hugh.

"I was writing in the dining-room—the door was open—and I heard you talking to that woman, and then I heard you crying, and I could not stand it. Have you not got over it yet?"

"Hugh," I cried, ceasing to sob, "how can you ask me! Never speak about it again! I knew you did not care; but that is no reason that I did not. I believe you were glad it died."

He made no reply, and I swept the little garments together, and began to roll them up with a sort of pang.

"Were you not?"

"I was—if I must answer you—not sorry that it did not live; but I am very sorry now, and I will tell you why. I used to think that it was a terrible thing for a child of mine to call you mother. I thought deception and falsehood were doubtless hereditary, and that between its natural proclivities and your bringing up it were far better it were dead, and when it did die I was not sorry. Now I believe I judged you harshly; you are not as bad as I thought. You have been the tool of others, and more sinned against than sinning, and I am sorry for your sake the baby did not live; but after all, situated as we are, we are better without a child. It would only be a perpetual bone of contention between us. You would want to bring it up in your way, I in mine. You would want to have it with you, and so would I, for although you might not suspect it, I am fond of children."

"You! Never! You would not speak so if you were. Here's Mrs. Rose, at the front door," he added, quickly. "What is to be done?" alluding to my eyes and the scattered baby clothes.

For a moment he stood in the breach, to give me time to collect myself whilst he interviewed Ada; but he could not keep her out, and she came in, and he disappeared.

In faltering words I told her of my visitor, and accounted for the display of baby linen.

"Which gives me a chance I have long wanted," she said. "I have never liked to speak to you about your poor little dead baby, and you have never alluded to it. Hugh begged me never to mention it. He said he thought you had got over it, and there was no use in making you miserable; but I did not think you were likely to forget it soon. However, I said nothing."

She made up for this silence by saying a great deal now. Together we went over all the tiny articles, and together we wept. I cried so much, that at seven o'clock it was very doubtful if my eyes would permit me to venture to the ball at ten. They did not; and Hugh, to whom I never opened my lips all dinner time, was obliged to depart alone in all the glory of his full-dress uniform.

A few days later another ball took place, and to this I went with eyes that were above suspicion. It was a very large, brilliant affair, and I was glad that I had a pretty, fresh dress ready for the occasion. It was made of very white silk, bordered all round the bottom with clusters of white roses, and draped with very soft white silk gauze. I had been very cool to Hugh for several days. I found him waiting for me in the drawing-room when I went in, Peggy following me with my cloak. He was reclining in an arm-chair, doing nothing. On the table lie a parcel directed to me—a large square parcel.

"You may as well leave it till you come back," he said, following my eyes. "It came through my bankers. It looks like a case of dessert knives and forks."

"I must see what it is," I cried, eagerly. "It is not every day that I get a present." With scissors, and Peggy's assistance, I tore off the wrappers, and there was revealed a red velvet jewel-box. I opened it. On the top was a formal receipt from Gold and Onyx for six thousand pounds, and interest, and underneath being my diamond necklace.

"Do you know anything about this?" he asked, in dismay.

"No, nothing," I replied, starting up, and looking at my receipt and my jewels with amazement.

"Have you no idea who has redeemed it?"

"No, not the slightest. I never was so surprised."

"Well, since it is yours once more you may as well put it on, and give the public a sight of the Begum's diamonds."

"I would rather not—I don't like them. Strange as it may sound, I am sorry they have come back; they always bring me nothing but bad luck."

"Except once—that time they drew my attention to you in the theatre."

"Oh, yes!—the exception that goes to prove the rule."

In the end I was overpersuaded by Hugh and Peggy, and the famous diamonds once more glistened on my neck as we drove off to the ball. As we went along, flashing back light against each lamp we passed, Hugh said,—

"You will give me a dance, won't you?"

"Yes, if you like. What shall it be?"

"A waltz—the waltz after supper, or during supper, when the room is pretty clear. I'll get you a programme the first thing."

And so he did, and scribbled down H. H. for number twelve, and after we had made our bows to our hosts I was swallowed up by a crowd of would-be partners, and for a time saw Hugh no more.

I enjoyed myself excessively; my cavaliers danced well—my dress was pretty—the floor and band were perfect. Over and over again I sent away temporary suitors for my hand. Many of them were new comers—strangers from Dublin—and Dublin garrison. One of them, as he walked me about after our waltz number eleven, said,—

"It's too bad you have not another dance to spare. Can't you throw over the next fellow? Who is he? He can't be very keen about it, or he would be looking you up now. I dare say he is at supper, and has forgotten it altogether!"

Not a very complimentary idea!

"If he has it shall be yours and welcome."

"Who is he—this mysterious H. H.?" exclaiming my card.

"He is my husband."

"Your husband! Oh, come, that's all right. Husbands and wives have no business to dance together, and I dare say he is one of those portly field officers in the whist-room. Major or Colonel—which?"



I FOUND HUGH RECLINING IN AN ARM-CHAIR, DOING NOTHING.

"Neither. Merely a captain as yet."

"Well, you'll give me his chance, won't you, and we will go down and have supper afterwards! Here is a man coming over to ask you—determined-looking fellow. Mind you don't listen to him, Mrs. Halford."

"But he is my husband!"

"Nonsense! It's a waste of material allowing two people like you to marry—I mean in the way of looks. He, by rights, ought to have married some fiddle-headed young woman; and you a fellow that was ugly, like me. What do you say?"

"I say," with a little bow, as I took Hugh's arm, "good-bye for the present."

And in another moment we were launched among many other revolving couples. I have mentioned before that Hugh danced well. He steered perfectly. He steadied you with his arm without either carrying you off your feet or holding you in a loose, flabby grasp, as if he was afraid to touch you; in short, it was a treat to dance with Hugh—a treat I had not enjoyed for many a long day. The waltz over we went into the gorgeous supper-tent; and, on our way there, arm-in-arm, we met a group of friends talking earnestly together.

"Hallo, Halford. I don't think it is fair on us! Your dancing with your wife! Have you heard this bad news about poor Torpichen?" said Captain Rose.

"No," returned Hugh, in a surly voice.

"By the way, you knew him very well, Mrs. Halford! I know you will be sorry to hear it, I am sure!"

"Hear what?" I inquired, tremulously.

"He was out with a party in his yacht *The Nemesis*, and she was run down by a steamer off Dover. Every soul was drowned. It happened at night."

I did not speak; I could not. Hugh, instead of going towards the supper-room, turned abruptly into a small, empty ante-room when we were quite alone. He then released me and sat down, looking very white and shaken; and presently tears

began to steal down my face—my tears were now so ready.

"Of course you are very sorry!" said Hugh, grimly. "And if it were anyone else I should be sorry too. As it is, I think he has only got what he deserves."

"Oh, Hugh!" I exclaimed. "How can you be so hard, so cruel, so wicked! What has he ever done to you?"

"He has been in love with you, and it was not his fault—no, not his fault—that you did not run away with him! He compromised you in the eyes of the world. He disgraced you in mine, and he stole your heart from me. In the spirit you gave yourself to him, though not in the letter."

"Never—never!" I cried, "never!"

"It looks like it. Why this violent sorrow, these floods of tears? Would you weep in this heart-broken fashion if I were dead! Not you!"

Seemingly my tears had the effect of lashing Hugh into a towering passion. Every moment he became more and more angry. His face, as he stood over me, reminded me of those dreadful days at Southsea. It looked so black and so stern!

"Hugh!" I cried, suddenly getting up, and seizing his arm. "I wonder that I do not hate you! Do not say any more of these dreadful things to me, or I believe that I will! When those I care for die you are glad. This is not human. This is fiendish! Ralph did love me, and if I had chosen I could have been his wife. I choose you instead—a man, jealous to the verge of insanity. I liked Ralph. He was very, very kind to me. I can't bear to think of him lying dead—deep down in the sea. Oh, poor, poor Ralph! Many a time I was sharp and cross to you! I wish I could recall all that now!" and I burst out crying afresh.

"What is the matter! Is Mrs. Halford ill?" inquired a hateful feminine voice; and there stood Mrs. Horne hanging on the arm of Captain Cook. She took in the scene before her eyes

with undisguised relief—I in tears, Hugh black as thunder.

"It is merely that my wife has heard of the death of a cousin, and is very much upset," said Hugh, promptly. "I brought her here to be out of the way. Will you kindly remain with her whilst I fetch her a glass of champagne! Yes, Di, you must have it, and then I'll order the carriage."

So saying he left me alone with mine enemy.

"Who is it?" she asked. "A near relative?"

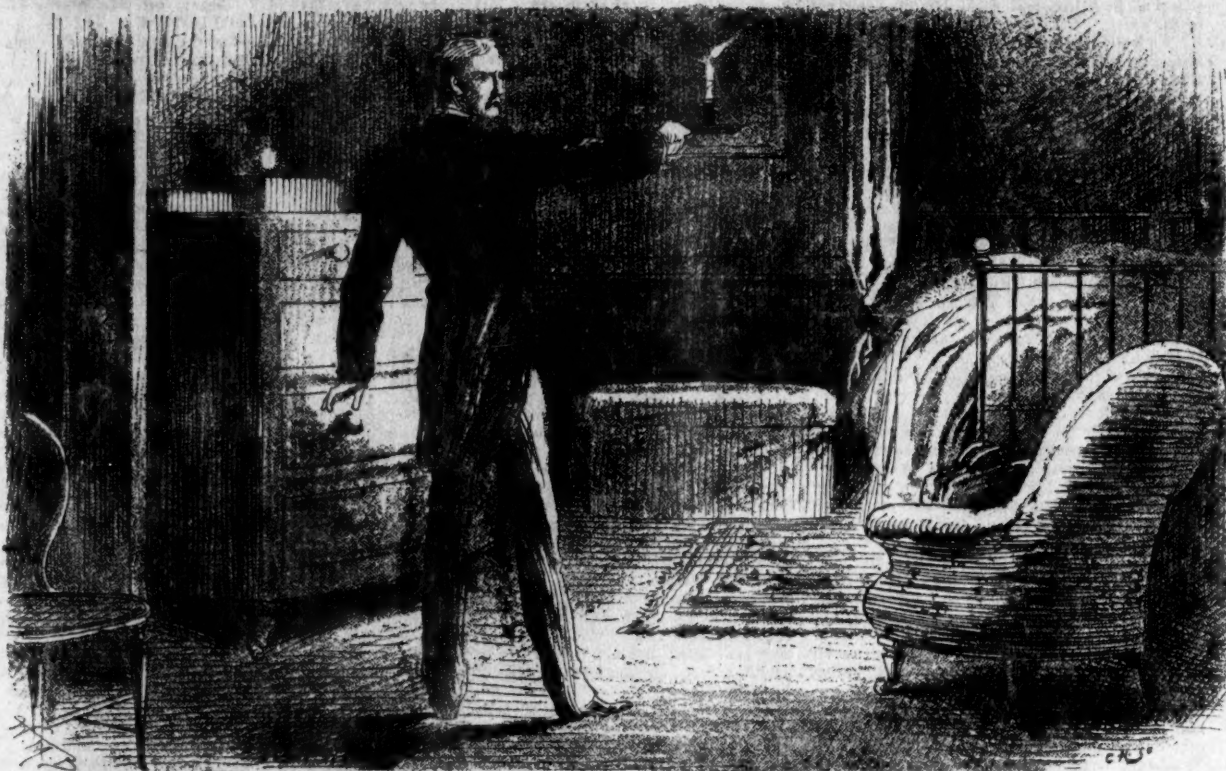
"A cousin. He has been drowned. Sir Ralph Torpichen!"

"Oh, has he been drowned? No wonder that you are in such a state. Some little bird told me that you were great friends, and that dear Hugh was a little jealous."

I made no answer whatever to this agreeable speech, but sat with my face buried in my handkerchief till Hugh returned, and when I went away I neither wished Mrs. Horne good-night, nor looked towards her. She might think it was grief if she chose; but for the future I was resolved to cut her dead.

(To be continued.)

LECTURING on "The Art of Life" at Newport, Monmouth, recently, Professor Hubert Herkimer told his audience the story of his picture, "The Last Muster." The picture, he said, was painted against the advice of every friend he had. He, however, set his teeth together, and worked as only a desperate man could work, with domestic sorrow and trouble to be borne whilst the work was proceeding. Never, he said, was a painting sent to the Academy with such trepidation as this one was. But after five days' anxious waiting there came letters, not of rejection, but of warm commendation, from Lord Leighton (then Mr. Leighton) and Mr. George Richmond. The acceptance of that picture was the first striking success of his career.



JAMES LOOKED ANXIOUSLY ROUND THE ROOM—HIS WIFE WAS GONE.

THE TRIALS OF HERMIONE.

CHAPTER V.

DENIS, LORD CARLYON, was not in the least like his father's family. He had not the dark hair, stately bearing, and clear-cut, cameo-like features which were almost an inheritance among the Carlyons; he was not exactly handsome, but no one could have called him plain; his face was redeemed from that by a pair of large, expressive brown eyes, which could look as soft and tender as a woman's, and yet knew how to express scorn and contempt when such were merited.

He was tall and thin, a quiet, dreamy-looking man, more fit, some people thought, to be a distinguished author than a peer of the realm.

His father had decreed that Denis was not to be a soldier, and had hoped he would study diplomacy, but Denis said frankly it was not his line. He would rather be a great traveller than anything else in the world, but as that would have entailed heavy expenses and brought little return but fame when his father died he gave up that ambition, and instead of trying to penetrate where man's foot had never trod before, he took up literature, spent some hours most days at his desk, while for holiday every year he went abroad not to the beaten paths of the Continent, but further afield where everything was fresh and new to him.

He did not live with his mother, though when in England he often ran down to Harley-gardens, but most of his time was spent in some quiet chambers within the precincts of the Temple, where he had established himself as a bachelor very soon after he came of age.

The rent was high, but then Denis had few other extravagances, and those three rooms became very dear to him; the housekeeper cleaned them and waited on him; his meals were sent in from a restaurant, unless he took them at a club, and each year found him adding to his choice artistic furniture, till his sister Janet, after

lunching with him once, declared the place was much too elegant and charming for a mere man.

But there was nothing feminine about the rooms. The housekeeper (for a consideration) let one of the upper rooms allotted to herself to Mr. Carlyon as a kind of combined larder, pantry and lumber-room, his own three were respectively bed-room, dining-room and study; the latter was furnished entirely in old oak, and had a large "roll top" desk, by drawing down the shutter over the front of which Denis secured his papers from any fear of the housekeeper's scrutiny.

One half of the study was lined with books, another had a few rare pictures; the windows looked out on to the broad court, where lawyers and barristers could be seen by dozens in term time making their way to and from their chambers.

Mrs. Carlyon always deplored that Denis lived in London, but Janet declared that if she had been a man she would have had just such an abode as her brother's.

Unlike his cousin Hermione, Denis Carlyon had been familiar with "the Deed of Settlement" from his earliest years. Before his father's death the young fellow said frankly he considered it did his cousin a great injustice.

"Then you don't know her precious old parent," retorted the colonel. "If that deed had not been drawn up he would have made ducks and drakes of the property in no time; besides Denis, really my cousin had hardly a leg to stand on. It was the certainty that he would fight the case to the bitter end, and that he could pay neither my costs nor his own which made me agree to a compromise!"

"And you have never seen him since!"

"Never once. I can't say that I regret it. Hugh and I never suited each other. Your mother wanted me to make friends with him for the little girl's sake, and I did attempt it, but I failed utterly."

"You mean he wouldn't be reconciled!"

"He sent me a curt note saying, that as soon as he was dead I could take possession, of

Carlyon, but while the breath was still in his body I need not trouble myself about it."

"Polite."

"It was just like him. Of course, after that I made no further advances."

"And the child lives alone with her father. Perhaps he is saving a fortune for her."

"My dear Denis, Hugh never saved a shilling in his life. However long he lives, Hermione will be penniless at his death, and if it is I who come into the place I shall settle five thousand pounds on her; more would be unjust to my own children, but that will bring in enough to keep the poor child from any hardship, and be a little dowry for her if she marries."

After his father's death Denis Carlyon remembered this conversation, and made a mental resolution that he would do the same for his little cousin as the colonel had intended, and then he forgot Hermione in the excitement—the rapture and anxiety of a man's first love.

The object of his divinity was a pretty fair-haired creature with a pink and white complexion, and an angelic childlike smile; she accepted Mr. Carlyon and referred him to her father, but when Sir Edward Tempest heard how remote were the sutor's expectations, how small his present means, he shook his head.

"You have three hundred a year of your own, and you earn perhaps half as much more, not five hundred all told; why, it would be genteel poverty."

"I must come in for Carlyon some day, Sir Edward," said Denis, gravely, "my name stands next in the entail. I can offer Sylvia ten thousand a year and a peerage then."

"Ah, but when! Lord Carlyon's not sixty, and hale and hearty; he takes enormous care of himself, and comes of a long-lived race. He'll probably last till eighty. Admitting he dies at seventy, he'll keep you waiting ten years. You can't expect me to let Sylvia enter on a ten years' engagement. Why, her pretty colour

would all be faded, and she'd be quite an old maid."

"I never thought of our waiting," said Denis, simply. "I thought we could begin quietly. I know that my father started his married life on an income no larger than mine."

"Life was not so luxurious then," said Sir Edward. "Sybil is the eldest of my girls, and must set a good example to her sisters."

At first Miss Tempest promised to be true to Denis, "even if Lord Carlyon lived to be ninety."

Then, after a few months, she began to wish "that tiresome old man would die." Finally, when her younger sister was engaged to a wealthy stockbroker, she could "bear it no longer," and accepted a Manchester millionaire, telling Denis Carlyon, in a much-scented note, that she really could not waste the best years of her life in a hopeless engagement.

Denis had loved her well; had poured out on her all the romantic affection a young man gives to the first woman who touches his heart; but Sylvia's loss by no means wrecked his life; after a very short interval he was able to meet Mrs. Empson in society without a pang, and when his mother deplored his disappointment, he said simply an affection which could not stand the test of even a year's waiting was not worth regretting.

And after Mrs. Empson's marriage, no other woman's name was ever linked with Denis Carlyon's. He seemed somehow to grow older and graver after that episode to pose more as the elder brother, and with his mother, the joint head of the orphan family. They were all fond of him, even Kate, the sharp of tongue and judgment, never said an unkind word of Denis. They grew proud, too, of such mild literary success as came to him, and when he set out for Australia with the certainty of being away at least a year he left behind him many fond regrets.

"You are sure you do not mind being deserted for so long?" he had asked his mother the evening before he sailed, when Mrs. Carlyon had seemed a little low-spirited at the parting.

"Quite sure!" she answered, rallying her spirits for his sake. "With Janet and her David so near—not to speak of their babies I shall not feel lonely."

"And Kate?" put in Denis.

Mrs. Carlyon sighed just a little.

"I think Denis, though we live in the same house, Kate really seems farther away from me than you will do in Australia. She is very clever; but she has grown beyond me."

"Well, mother, if you want me, remember you have only got to cable. Just send the one word 'Come,' and I'll be with you in little over six weeks. If you don't send, why I may stay till Easter in next year. I confess I should like to see an Australian summer."

He sailed in March, and for some months his letters from home were quiet and uneventful records of his mother's doings. Then when the much-talked-of summer had come, and he was experiencing the strange sensation of being much too hot in November, the man, his friend had sent forty miles on horseback to the nearest post-office to fetch the English mail (that is, so much of it as concerned the household at Barongowra, brought among the letters a cable-gram, which for an instant made Denis Carlyon's heart stand still.

Was it to tell him his mother was dead? Had aught of evil happened to Janet? Such were his first thoughts. Then, with a desperate effort of will, he tore open the envelope. The sender was "Norton," a name he recognised as that of his cousin's lawyer. The message was imperative: "Lord Carlyon died suddenly yesterday. Return at once."

Denis sat lost in thought. How much this might have meant to him once! Seven years ago this news would have meant the signal for his marriage; would have been the end of Sylvia's long waiting; now it really seemed to him that he cared very little.

He was not in the least ambitious of wealth and rank. He had been brought up in simple comfort, with ample means for a quiet, refined home life; and people with such a training rarely

have the yearning after luxury which comes to those reared in poverty. Then he had never been in Westshire since his childhood; had only once seen the ancestral home of the Carlyons; even his father had been there but seldom, and his mother never. There were no old associations, no affectionate recollections handed down from father to son which could make the thought of that fair estate warm his heart. For his own part he loved his chambers in the Temple more than any other local habitation; and not being fond of a country life, looked forward with something of dread to taking his place as Carlyon of Carlyon.

His host was busy on the farm, his hostess was resting in the sleepy, sunshiny afternoon hours; there was no one to disturb him with questions or congratulations; he could look his position quietly in the face.

Of course he must go home. If he sailed at once (that is, as soon after he could get back to Sydney as a homeward-bound steamer started) he might reach England about the middle of January. It was not worth while to wait at the Antipodes till he received further particulars by letter; indeed, there could be no particulars to send. The case was plain enough, he was Carlyon of Carlyon, and he must take up the duties connected with his inheritance.

He wondered if his mother would break up her home in Brighton and come to live with him. He could hardly fancy Kate happy four miles from a railway station; but his mother loved the country, and would have a delight in seeing her son's property. Yes; of course his mother would keep his house. She might object to leave Janet, but then Janet had her husband and those wonderful babies.

There was a pleased hum of mingled congratulations and dismay at tea that night. Mr. and Mrs. North were delighted that Denis had come into his inheritance, but grieved that his visit must end so suddenly. They were a charming couple, and, though want of means had first sent them to the Antipodes, they had made first-rate colonists, and were "getting on."

"You'll never be able to come back," said Blanche, regretfully; "Lord Carlyon will be far too grand a person to be spared to pay visits to Australia."

"You must return this visit before I make another," said Denis, warmly. "When you take that trip home you so often talk of, you must put in a month or two at Carlyon, and let us compare notes of our experiences in the interval."

"Make no rash promises, Blanche," put in her husband. "There'll be a Lady Carlyon soon, and she might not care for visitors from the back woods of Australia."

But Denis said, firmly, he should never marry; and that whenever they came to Carlyon there would be a welcome for them; and then, as Mr. North was sending his buggy into the township two days later, it was decided that Lord Carlyon had better go with it as far as the nearest railway station, where he could take train for Sydney.

He stayed some days in Sydney as no ship was starting, and ten thousand a-year making the young man a little reckless as to his expenditure, besides a brief cable to Mr. North which contained these three words, "Arrive, January 20th," he sent a much lengthier message to his mother,

"Returning at once. Prepare to come with me to Carlyon as its mistress. Denis."

He took his passage in his new title, and found that "Lord Carlyon" was most popular with the passengers, particularly such ladies as had marriageable daughters on board. It might have made Denis a little cynical to see the difference made by the handle to his name, only that he was much taken up with an invalid gentleman, who, after spending the best years of his life in the colony, was going home to die. At least that was the opinion of his fellow-passengers. Mr. Home himself spoke hopefully of his recovery and spending many years in his native land. He was evidently very wealthy; and from the moment of their first meeting he took an extraordinary fancy to Lord Carlyon.

While Denis pitied the lonely traveller from

the bottom of his heart, and wondered sympathetically who would be right as to his fate, the ship's doctor, who declared that Mr. Home could hardly expect to reach England alive, or the patient himself who spoke of buying "a nice little place in Devonshire, and settling down for the rest of his life."

The lonely invalid had a servant with him, half-valet, half-companion, a man who seemed abjectly devoted to his master, but for whom Lord Carlyon felt an innate distrust.

"You don't like Andrew," said the invalid one day when Denis had dismissed the valet rather bluntly, after trying to induce his master to go below.

"I think he presumes."

"Ah, I may have spoiled him, but he is a good fellow and devoted to me. I've had him ten years, and I do believe I'd trust him with untold gold."

"Is he colonial?"

"No, English. He came out about twelve years ago with a young nobleman travelling for his health. His master died and the poor fellow was on his beam ends. He hadn't the money to pay his passage home, and as it's not many people in the colony want such a servant he tried to get a clerkship, heaps of other things, he was just at the end of his tether when I fell in with him."

Denis Carlyon had to own as the voyage progressed that Andrew was a skilled attendant and a devoted nurse. In fact, Lord Carlyon slowly came to the conclusion, Andrew really cared for his master, though he himself could never have placed any confidence in the dark, smooth-faced valet who seemed far too much of a gentleman for the post he filled. Andrew himself sought Denis out one evening when the voyage was about half accomplished, and expressed his belief that his master was failing. It was madness, utter madness, in his state to land in England in January. Could not my lord prevail on Mr. Home to leave the steamer at Naples, a climate far better suited to his condition?

The man seemed so much in earnest; his anxiety was apparently so genuine that Denis began to think he had misjudged him.

"I will suggest it to Mr. Home, but I have little hope of success. His heart seems set on going to England."

"But there's no need," said Andrew, obstinately. "My lord, there's no need for him to risk his life. Of course, I know he's only going to England to find the young lady, but the lawyers can do that for him and send her out to Naples."

Denis had too much delicacy to discuss Mr. Home's private concerns with his servant, but he was not a little surprised at Andrew's words. What young lady could Mr. Home desire to see? He was a man of fifty, and more than half his life had been spent in Australia. He had never been married, and had expressly told Lord Carlyon that his father died two years after his marriage, when he was a baby, and he lost his mother when quite a child. Under these circumstances what near relations could Mr. Home possess?

A day or two later the invalid was so much worse that the doctor told him his reaching England was hopeless, and the Captain, a kindly, warm-hearted man, himself begged Mr. Home to trust him with any last wishes that he could convey to anyone in England.

Mr. Home shook his head.

"I think you and the doctor are mistaken, Captain; but, if you're bent on it I may as well set my house in order, but there's only one man on board I'll trouble to act for me. Send Lord Carlyon down here, and I'll give him my last charges. He's not a busy man like you, Captain, and so my bit of work won't worry him."

Denis obeyed the summons at once. He had not seen Mr. Home for two days, and was struck by the change in him.

"Of course, I will undertake the trust," he said, in answer to the other. "Only give me what you wish in charge, and I promise you I will transmit it to its destined owner."

"It's—it's a little matter of money; fifty thou—

sand pounds. I want you to find my sister Lucy, and make it over to her. Just see that her husband don't make ducks and drakes of it; and if she's dead, tie it up on her children, share and share alike."

"Then Miss Home is married?"

"I don't know. She was a little girl with a doll the last time I saw her; but, of course, she's a woman grown by now. She'd be nearly forty; I've forgotten how time goes."

It never struck Denis then (though it was to come back to him later) that this was a direct contradiction to Home's previous story that his father died during his infancy, and he lost his mother some two years afterwards; but Denis Carlyon was a man of very strong feeling, and he was so cut up at his friend's state that he could hardly think clearly.

"I made my will long ago," said Mr. Home, "but I've destroyed it now. I want you to draw me up another."

"I!" Denis started; "but I never did such a thing in my life. I might make a flaw in it, which would render it so much waste paper."

"Oh, I'll take care of that; I'll dictate what I want you to say. Really, Carlyon, I believe that young doctor's a croaker, and that I shall be as well as ever in a day or two; but it's as well to be prepared."

Denis Carlyon took pen and paper, and sat down on the sofa in Mr. Home's cabin. He never forgot that scene to his last day.

"I, Donald Home, late of Sydney, Australia, and now a passenger on the steamer *Arethusa*, homeward bound, revoking all former wills, do declare this my last will and testament. I appoint Denis, Lord Carlyon, my residuary legatee and the executor of this will, and I authorise him to take possession of all my effects in this ship if I should die on the voyage, and of the sixty thousand pounds now standing to my credit at Messrs. Goldsmith Brothers, Bankers, of Pall Mall; and I direct him to settle fifty thousand of this sum on my sister Lucy or her children, for her or their individual use. To pay one thousand pounds to my valet, Andrew Duncan, in gratitude for his attentive service, and from the remainder of the money to defray all expenses consequent on the search for my said sister, and so hand the balance to any charity connected with Australia he thinks fit."

The captain and doctor witnessed Mr. Home's signature, and the latter locked the will away in his own safe. Then Lord Carlyon and the dying man were once more alone.

"You've forgotten one thing," said Denis, sadly; "how am I to find your sister?"

"I have forgotten nothing. You'll find the certificate of my mother's second marriage, and of Lucy's birth, in my desk with a bundle of letters, the few they ever sent me."

A mist seemed to clear from Carlyon's sight.

"Then your mother did not die when you said you 'lost' her?"

"No; she married a gentleman who was jealous of her every thought. He put me to school and paid my school bills; but he wouldn't let me live with my mother, and I—I hated him."

"He got me a berth on a merchant ship, and sent me out to rough it as I might when I was only fifteen. I hated the sea, and when we got to Sydney I threw up my post and hired myself out in a store."

"The proprietor had lost his own son, just my own age, and took a fancy to me. Whatever I have or hope to be I owe to him and his wife. I had very bitter thoughts of my stepfather; but I heard he died within a year of my leaving England. Then I began to wonder if I ought to go home and look after my mother; but I reflected she and Lucy would have their own grand friends, and not want me, so I just stayed where I was; but the certificates and letters will be ample for your purpose. Lucy's father was a well-known man, and it can't be difficult to find his daughter."

Denis was not so sanguine; but he could not have said a word to sadden the dying man.

The doctor proved right. Mr. Home died at sunset, and the next day his body was committed to the deep with the sad and impressive ceremonial ordered for "Burials at Sea."

Denis could hardly believe he had known him

only one short month. He felt as if he had lost an old friend.

The Captain was a good man of business. He had the will in his own keeping, and thought it had better remain in his safe till they reached Plymouth; but he at once gave effect to one of its provisions, and caused the whole of poor Mr. Home's luggage to be placed in Lord Carlyon's possession.

The returned colonist had very little luggage for so rich a man. No doubt he had sold everything but his personal clothes and etceteras. Two large portmanteaus held all his worldly goods. Anthony interrogated declared there was nothing of his master's in the hold.

Denis, who still felt a slight distrust of the valet, did not hasten to tell him of the provision for him.

He was to regret this bitterly later on, for unknown to anyone but the crew, Duncan left the *Arethusa*, at Naples, declaring that the ship was hateful to him since his master's death.

The day before they expected to reach Plymouth, Lord Carlyon opened Mr. Home's desk. He was to meet Mr. Norton on landing, and he had decided to consult the lawyer on the very delicate business entrusted to him, and to do this it was advisable first to peruse all the papers which had any reference to the unknown Lucy.

The desk was small, and to Denis Carlyon's dismay he found very few of the papers he sought.

There was only one certificate, and that referred to the marriage of Margaret Gordon and Donald Home. Of the second marriage of the lady and her daughter's birth, there was no reference.

There were in all four letters, all dated from Ashley House, and all from the postmarks on their envelopes written in the year 1860.

They were very simple letters, brimming over with motherly love, and assuring the boy that though she could not keep him with her, the writer thought of him every day, and was bringing up his little sister to do the same.

There was a faded portrait (taken in the earlier days of photography) of a lady with a little girl on her lap, and (Carlyon only found this on a second search) a tiny sheet of child's note paper, quite covered in a big text hand; but that was signed "Lulu," just as the other letters had ended, "Your loving mother."

Denis Carlyon felt bewildered. His first thought was to suspect the servant Andrew of tampering with the desk; but apart from the valet having no earthly motive for so doing, it seemed impossible he could have stolen any papers, as the few remaining were all enclosed in a tough official-looking envelope of cartridge paper, which was sealed with Mr. Home's own signet ring which bore his monogram, and had never left his finger till the Captain handed it to Carlyon with his watch and chain.

It seemed to Denis that he was left with fifty thousand pounds in trust for an unknown woman whom he had not the slightest means of tracing, since his only information about her was that her name was Lucy, and that in the year 1860, when presumably eight years old, she was living with her parents at a house called "Ashley House," and sufficiently near the metropolis for the postmark to be London, S.W.

It was a hopeless mystery, and Denis found himself thinking a great deal more about Mr. Home's unknown sister than his own honours as Carlyon, of Carlyon.

CHAPTER VI.

JAMES CLIFFORD must have had an uneasy conscience, for he was quite as anxious to postpone his meeting with Hermione as she could be, only that, whereas his wife hoped never to see him again, he fully intended to "get things settled" that very evening, only he wanted to leave it so late that his wife might have worn herself out with grief and watching, and so be, as he put it, easier to manage.

And yet the man really loved Hermione after a fashion, but his low sensual nature was incapable of any but a selfish affection.

He looked on his girl-bridge as something completely at his mercy as part of his goods and chattels, but he meant when he had once established his own supremacy as her lord and master, to be very good to her.

So the evening wore away. The ham and eggs removed at last, tobacco and whisky took their place, for as the absent lodger was an inveterate smoker the pipe could tell no tales.

James and his young brother puffed away together amicably, till as the clock struck eight Mrs. Clifford said plaintively, "Ain't she coming down at all? She'll just be starved with cold. I never can put a bit of fire in that grate upstairs because it bakes and smokes so."

"James thinks we're not good enough for her," said Jane, "and means to keep her to himself."

Jane, taught in a Board school, she would probably never rise to a headmistress-ship, but in the meantime she earned eighty pounds a year, was quite contented with herself and her position, and thought her liberal contribution to the family exchequer gave her the right to bully her relatives when she thought it for their good.

"I don't think anything of the kind," retorted Jim; "but if you'd seen Carlyon with its hundred rooms and score of servants, why you'd forgive Hermione for finding Essex-street not quite to her taste; but I'm going up now to fetch her. You'd better give over smoking, Bill."

"Did you give up smoking all the time you were at Carlyon?" retorted Bill, knocking the ashes out of his pipe.

"I smoked in the smoking-room; but not cheap shag. Lord Carlyon boasted the finest tobacco I ever saw. He gave nine shillings a pound for it, and his cigars came straight from Havana. The old fellow knew how to enjoy himself, I can tell you."

Now and again one hears of converted savages who on going back to their own tribes after a long stay in a civilized country, have promptly given up both religion and civilization and relapsed into their former state.

It was the same sort of thing with James Clifford. At Carlyon, where everything had the stamp of aristocracy, he had managed to play the part of a gentleman with some success; but here among his own kindred, he relapsed into old habits and really did not seem much above his family.

He took the lighted candle (composited at sixpence a pound) his mother gave him and ran lightly upstairs, whistling the refrain of a comic song as he ran. Perhaps this was done as a signal of his approach, that if Hermione had locked herself in she might be ready to open to her liege lord.

He tapped at the door—no answer. Again the same result.

"Sulking still, I suppose," he muttered; "but it won't do young lady. You are Mrs. James Clifford now, and you swore to-day to obey me, as I shall have to remind you presently."

He turned the handle of the door and went in. She was not on the bed, though it still retained the impression made by her slight form. She was not on one of the cheap chairs before mentioned. James looked anxiously round the room—she was gone.

Yes, that must be it. Her hat, and coat, and gloves, everything belonging to her had vanished, except always the Gladstone bag which James had sent straight on to Essex-street when he met her that morning.

His first thought was to get assistance, a clearer head than his own to solve the problem. He went to the edge of the stairs, and called sharply,—

"Jane, come up here. I want you."

That Mrs. James had fainted and her aid in bringing her round was required, was the Board school teacher's idea, as she obeyed his summons; but when the door was shut on them both Jim told her the truth.

"Then she went out when Mr. Bruce came home. I heard his latch key and thought he was very slow in shutting the door."

"How long ago?"

"An hour and a half perhaps."

"Whew!"

"She can't have gone far," said Jane, "You say she knew nothing of London; besides Jim, no good hotel would take her in without luggage, and she didn't look the sort to go to anything but a swell one."

"The luggage was at Waterloo Station," said James, "I told her to leave it in the cloak-room. You see I didn't know if there was room for it here."

"Then the best thing you can do is to go to Waterloo and see if it's still there. If it's gone find the cabman who drove her, she couldn't take three boxes away without a cab."

"Jane, you are a deuced clever woman."

"I've got brains," said his sister, quietly, "and I can use them, that's all. Remember this, James, if you have to cross-question porters you must keep your temper, once get uncivil, and they'll not 'remember' a thing you want to know, and you'll find a florin or two refresh their memory wonderfully."

"Florine are none too plentiful with me, I can tell you," said Jim, dejectedly. "I was relying on dipping into Hermione's three hundred pounds to-morrow."

"You can't have spent all your salary. You only had it a fortnight ago."

"True, but ten pounds is not a fortune, and I've had to find the license and the ring, besides entertaining my bride at a most expensive café. I can tell you, Jane, ten pounds soon melts under such a strain."

If he hoped his sister would offer him an advance to further his search for his fugitive wife he was mistaken. Jane never took a hint, while he had borrowed money of her so often it was not likely she would propose a loan of her own accord.

Bill came out of the drawing-room and joined his brother as he left the house.

"What's up?" demanded the young fellow, bluntly. "You look in no end of a way. Won't your wife forgive you for not being a swell?"

"It's worse than that," groaned Jim. "I can't wait now. You can come with me if you like. She's bolted!"

"Bolted!"

They were out in the street now, and Bill spoke loudly in his surprise.

"Hush," said his brother, warningly. "Yes, she's gone, and I'm off to find her."

"But isn't it a trifle awkward," demanded Bill, "unless you know where she's gone?"

Jim set his teeth together in a vice.

"I'll make her pay for it when I find her," he said, brutally; "she's no more right to leave me than my dog or horse would have, supposing I'd had one."

Bill whistled. He was far rougher in appearance and manner than Jim, and utterly destitute of social veneer, but at least he was honest and possessed a heart.

"As to that, old chap, I don't like you to compare your wife to a brute beast!" he said, quietly. "And it seems to me she must have cared a precious lot about you to stoop to marry you. If any woman cared for me like that, I'd take good care she didn't run away from me. You must have done something very out of the common for your wife to bolt."

Jim answered nothing; he had halied a hansom, and they were soon dashing along to Waterloo. It was only an hour and a-half since Hermione had taken that self-same route. There was no one to tell them that this same cab had conveyed her away from Essex-street only ninety minutes before.

Waterloo is a large station, and to anyone unfamiliar with it one of the most puzzling in the world. James Clifford had travelled very little on the South Western Railway, he had not the faintest idea where to find the cloak-room, or even if there were more than one.

"There might be half a dozen from the size of the place," he groaned; but his younger brother was far more equal to the task.

"Hold your tongue, if you can't speak civilly!" he commanded, a little later, when Jim had sworn at a porter for asking him which cloak-room he wanted. "You'd better leave things to

me, or you'll set everyone against you at the start. Just tell me this! What station did your wife start from this morning; and by what train?"

"Ashley; by the 10.20. It's on the Southampton line."

"Good!"

Bill took a shilling from his pocket and approached a porter who seemed to have no special business on hand. He let the shilling show visibly, as he asked,—

"Can you tell me where the 10.20 train, from Ashley, came in this morning?"

"Just here," answered the porter, civilly enough; "for I was on duty myself. She were ten minutes' late through the fog."

"Then where would a lady, coming by that train, be likely to leave her luggage—which cloak-room, I mean?"

"The one in front of us, down that passage," said the porter; "but if you've got the ticket that'll tell you."

The shilling now changed hands.

Bill explained that they had not got the ticket. They were to have met the young lady—his sister—by the cloak-room, at eight that evening; being a little late, she had disappeared, and they hoped to find her by the luggage.

"There were precious few passengers by that train this morning," said the porter; "and I never noticed one lady by herself; but you can ask the cloak room clerk if he took in the things."

The clerk was perfectly civil, but not satisfactory.

"No luggage had been left with him that day under the name of Carlyon. Yes; in the usual course, passengers arriving by the train Bill mentioned, would come to that cloak-room; but no lady had left three large boxes that morning."

"A tall, dark lady, dressed in deep mourning," supplemented Jim.

The clerk shook his head and denied all knowledge of such a person. But the porter, who had lingered near as though personally concerned in their search now put in his word.

"I saw a lady just like that to-night; a tip-topper she looked, and no mistake, but as pale as death. I know when I helped her out of her cab she looked ready to faint."

"When was this?" asked Jim, eagerly.

"Soon after seven. I noticed her particular, because she seemed so reckless; she never even asked the man the fare; she just tossed him two half-crowns, and by the way he stared I should say the right charge was a shilling. 'Where for, miss?' I asked her, but she only shook her head, and said she was in no hurry; and, if you'll believe me, she stood there outside, cold as it was, until the man drove off with another fare. I noticed it particular, for I thought it looked as though she had run away and didn't want the cabman to be able to tell people where she was off to."

It was so near the truth that the porter must surely have been a good judge of human-nature.

"She did not go to the cloak-room!" asked Jim, hurriedly.

"I did not see her. She stood outside till the cab had got out of sight, and then she turned into the station. I had to go off just then and get a fidgety old gent's luggage labelled for Southampton, so I hadn't a chance to see what became of the lady; she'd gone by the time I passed that way again."

(To be continued.)

AN American claims to have accidentally discovered a substance which, when once ignited, cannot be extinguished by water or other means, but will burn itself out. It is easily and cheaply made, but the discoverer, afraid of the misuse to which it might be put, refuses to disclose the secret of the ingredients.

CHRONIC INDIGESTION and its attendant Misery and Suffering Cured with Tonic "DOCTOR" (purely vegetable), 2/6, from Chemists, 3/-, post free from Dr. HOKS, "Glendower," Bournemouth. Sample bottle and pamphlet, with Analytical Reports, 8s., 6 Stamps.

OUT OF THE DEPTHS.

—302—

"The grand tour!" Oh, how grandly that sounds! "Do you know, Mrs. Murray, that I have never been fifty miles away from this place in my life?"

"So you would like to travel, Linda?"

"Like!" the word is too tame. But—"the bright voice takes a lugubrious tone—"except in imagination I never expect to."

"What would be your answer, Linda, if I should ask you, as a favour, mind, to come with me—to be my companion abroad as at home?"

The young girl looks up incredulously.

"Mrs. Murray, what do you mean?" "Just this—and I have had it in my mind to propose to you a long time—that I wish to take my dear young friend with me when I journey away from my native land. Through your fresh, keen delight and appreciation, my own enjoyment will be enhanced fourfold, and as a contented mind conduces to health, the benefit my physician promises me from this projected tour will be all the surer and speedier. Will you accompany me, Linda?"

If ever a face shows delight and gratitude Linda's does now.

"How can I ever thank you for all your kindness!" she exclaims. "You have been a veritable fairy godmother, and now you are going to take me to fairyland with you."

Mrs. Murray first met Linda Desmond when two years ago the latter came to her in the capacity of a companion. She had conceived at first sight a fancy for the sweet-faced girl, which time and close acquaintance had deepened into an ardent affection.

It is Paris; gay, brilliant Paris.

Mrs. Murray and her young friend have been spending the afternoon sight-seeing and shopping, and now they are seated at a table in one of the many outdoor cafés, sipping their chocolate, and watching with interested, if somewhat tired, eyes, the lively scene about them.

Suddenly, as Mrs. Murray attempts to speak, her words fail, and with a quick gesture she presses her hand to her heart. Linda springs to her side just in time to catch her as she sinks into unconsciousness. In an instant all is confusion. Linda, poor girl, is at her wit's end, for her knowledge of French is but small, when suddenly the welcome accents of her mother-tongue fall upon her ear.

Before many minutes the three, Mrs. Murray and Linda, and the gentleman who has come to their assistance, are being whirled rapidly along to the hotel.

It is some distance away, and before they arrive, to Linda's inexpressible relief, Mrs. Murray revives from her swoon, and is able, when their destination is reached, to descend, and leaning upon the stranger's arm, to walk feebly into the house.

"Allow me to express my gratitude for your kindness, sir," she says, courteously. "In former days these fainting attacks were no strangers to me. I had hoped I had experienced the last; but my fatigue to-day must have been greater than I realised. But for you, sir, my young friend would have been placed in a very embarrassing position."

As the young man lifts his hat from his curly brown locks and smiles as he answers, Linda thinks to herself that never before has she seen a countenance so nobly handsome.

"You owe me no thanks, madam," he replied. "I am only too glad to be able to be of assistance. I hope you will feel none the worse for your sudden attack."

With another graceful bow, which includes Linda, the young man re-enters the carriage in which they came and is rolled away.

"A very nice young man; I wish I knew his name," Mrs. Murray remarks, as she reclines that evening upon her lounge, a little pale, but otherwise evincing no traces of her recent indisposition.

Her wish is soon gratified, for as she and Linda enter the brilliantly-lighted reception-saloon of a friend, that same young gentleman is one of the first to be presented to them.

Linda, always pretty, is so charming to-night that she deserves the title of "La belle Anglaise" that is everywhere bestowed on her. She is dressed very becomingly in a pale-cream robe that sets off to perfection the satiny rose-tinted fairness of her complexion and the dark splendour of her hair and eyes.

To say Raymond Vincent loses his heart would be wrong, for he has lost it already.

If Linda had admired him at the first meeting, he had been completely charmed with her, and now he makes good use of the opportunity Fortune has thrown in his way.

A month speeds by on Love's own swift wings. Mrs. Murray looks on at the little idyll being enacted before her, a pleased spectator.

"He is of an aristocratic family," her friend at whose house the young people were introduced has assured her; so she feels called upon to act the part of no stern, forbidding duenna, but rather rejoices at the brightness of the future that seems opening before her dear, young favourite.

A month later finds Mrs. Murray still in Paris, and her companion, Linda Desmond, the promised wife of the only son of an English nobleman.

The rumour of Raymond's betrothal to a portionless young girl flies on rapid wings among his acquaintances, and through them reaches his father before the young man, dreading opposition, has made up his mind to acquaint him with the new compact into which he has entered.

And thus it happens that to Linda, one afternoon, comes a caller who takes with him, when he departs, all the hope and brightness of a loving young heart. As Linda reads upon the card which the servant brings her, the name "Lord Vincent," her face flushes a lovely colour.

"It is Raymond's father! Raymond has written him of our betrothal, and he has hastened to come and see me. How kind!"

But when the young girl encounters the cold, contemptuous gaze of her visitor's proud eyes, she sees that his errand is no kindly one. But if the haughty lord thinks to intimidate the young girl, whom he stigmatises as "a scheming adventurer," he counts without his cost, for Linda's pride is equal to his own.

"Do not be afraid," she says, in a voice vibrating with intense feeling, in which scorn is up-moist and for the time drives away pain. "Were your son to come to me upon his bended knees I would not be his wife."

"Oh, Mrs. Murray! take me away!" is Linda's cry, a while later. "I must never see Raymond again. Should he plead I could not resist him; and sooner would I die than meet again that cruel man!"

Four years have elapsed. During the last, soon after their return, Linda's kind benefactress had died.

In one of her sudden fainting attacks her spirit had fled from its tenement of clay, never to return.

In her will all of her fortune, which was large, was left to her young friend, Linda Desmond.

Thus we meet our heroine again. But although it would seem that Fortune has poured all her richest gifts at her feet, though youth, beauty and wealth are hers, it is easy to see that Linda is not happy.

She is seated this morning by the window, her hands lying listlessly in her lap, the embroidery, with which she has sought to beguile the time that hangs so heavily, unheeded.

Her face is very pale, and the sombre crape of her apparel makes it seem more so. There is a very sad, pathetic expression in her brown eyes, whence, from time to time, tears steal down her cheeks.

Her thoughts are busy with the past, with the dear friend whom she had grown to love with a daughter's affection, and whose sudden loss is still such a fresh pain, and another anguish that, though remoter, yet causes her heart to throb

with sufferings as keen as when first young love received its death wound.

"Was there ever anyone more alone than I!" she muses, bitterly. "My parents, my lover, my dear benefactress, all taken from me. I have nothing to live for."

Just then comes an interruption to her sad thoughts, as a servant knocks to inform her that a gentleman wishes to see her.

"It's a lame gentleman, and he sent no card, ma'am," the girl answers to her mistress's inquiry.

"A lame gentleman!" No one among her acquaintances answers to that description. And so, never imagining for an instant the surprise that awaits her, Linda goes down to the parlour.

As she enters the room, a tall form rises slowly, with the aid of a crutch, from a chair, and advances to meet her.

With a cry of startled pain, Linda springs forward to shrink back as suddenly. Can this pale, crippled man be the lover who had combined in the one person all the beauty and grace of manhood?

Raymond notices and interprets her demeanour wrongly. An expression of sadness crosses his features.

"I do not wonder that you shrink from me, Miss Desmond," he says. "Do not for a moment suppose that I have sought and found you to take advantage of our former relations that were severed so long ago. I came in obedience to the request of my dead father. He was taken ill three months ago, and during his last illness I learned, for the first time, that it was his hand that so ruthlessly dashed the cup of my life's happiness from my lips; and that all these years I had been wronging in my mind one who, instead of being a hard-hearted coquette, as I had deemed her, had been as cruelly injured as myself. He had kept his secret well; even during his own sickness, when I had come back from the war with the Zulus, almost a wreck, with but little chance, and less hope, of living the year out, he did not disclose the truth. But in his own last moments he remorsefully told me all, and begged me to promise that after his death I would seek out the young girl whom he had wronged and tell her of his repentance for the harshness that had blighted two lives. I have no extenuation to make for my father." Raymond concludes, "save this: that he was proud and overwhelmingly fond of me, his only son; and he had mistakenly thought that, in preventing my marriage with a girl whose goodness and beauty were her only dower, he would further a matrimonial scheme he had long planned in his own mind."

Raymond paused; but as Linda does not speak, he goes on:—

"You must wonder how I discovered your whereabouts. A friend who had known of my engagement, wrote to me of your arrival here, and of Mrs. Murray's death. But, pray, believe me, that as I am now, though my love for you is still the strongest passion of my heart, had it not been for my promise to my dead parent nothing would have induced me to intrude myself upon you."

Now Linda finds her voice, and though it trembles with agitation, an unmistakable ring of joy thrills through its low, soft tones.

"As you are now!" Oh, Raymond, a love would be worthless, indeed, that time could cure, or a hero's scars terrify!"

It is three years later. Upon the velvety lawn, before an elegant English mansion, are a group of three, a lovely woman, a tall, distinguished-looking man, and a toddling, golden-haired child. It is Lord and Lady Vincent, and their two-year-old son.

They have only been at Vincent Towers a short fortnight, for among the physicians of his wife's native country Sir Raymond found one whose skilful efforts had restored to its usefulness his injured limb; and, though longing to show his bride his beautiful ancestral home, he had remained quiet until his cure had been effected.

Such a joyous home-coming as that had been!

Such a time of affectionate greetings, and warm well-wishings!

And thus happy in love of her husband and child, and surrounded by hosts of friends, we bid our heroine farewell. She has had her time of trial, but that is over, and now she will be able to appreciate the blessedness of sunshine all the more for having passed through the shadow.

THE UNCLE'S SECRET.

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CHAPTER X.

AT Lexmore Hall strange events were transpiring. A sudden coolness had sprung up in Harold Lexmore's heart toward Winnie Kinder. It had come about in this way: Since the night of the major's death, when she so boldly declared her hatred of poor, hapless Connie, he had seen Winnie's disposition in a new light; and the event which happened a week subsequent, turned the respect he had for her into the deepest loathing and disgust.

He had been walking in the garden late one moonlight night, when the sound of low, familiar voices fell upon his ear, and glancing around, he saw, to his astonishment, Winnie Kinder and George Grenfell, his father's ex-secretary, walking up the gravel walk together. In his right hand George carried a small ebony box.

Harold Lexmore was too much amazed to utter a word to acquaint them of his presence, even if the words that fell from Winnie's lips had not held him spell-bound.

"You ask me if I am glad Constance Culver is dead," she was saying, "and I answer yes. If she had lived to come between me and my dearest plans, I would have been tempted to kill her with my own hands! There is nothing under Heaven that makes a woman so desperate as to be thwarted in love. Do you think I could have borne to see Constance Culver the mistress of Lexmore Hall, the most magnificent place in the county, courted, admired, sought after, while I was turned adrift on the world with the paltry two thousand the major—the mean old thing!—left me in his will! No, no; the girl should never have lived to triumph over me like that—never!"

From that time on, Harold Lexmore never glanced at Winnie's white hands without shuddering. Great Heaven! how near he had come to marrying this girl who could talk so calmly of taking Connie's life! He was glad no regular engagement existed between them. He would not have married Winnie now to have saved his life. There is no feeling so bitter as love turned to loathing and disgust.

When they were quite out of hearing, Harold Lexmore threw himself down on the grass beneath the beech-trees. So this was the end of his love-dream! His idol was shattered. Dainty, pretty Winnie, with her sweet smiles and coaxing ways, was at heart a regular scheming virago, who would scruple at nothing—even human life, if it stood between her and her triumph. He was appalled at the thought.

And in that bitter moment he remembered poor little Connie's pure, unselfish love for him—the love that chose death, that it might bring him what he sighed for—freedom.

He hid his face in his hands and groaned aloud. But it was too late now for vain regrets; his heart had gone out to Connie too late. The beautiful lips were cold that had uttered the words, in all childish simplicity and childish innocence, "I thought, when they sent for me to promise to marry you, that you loved me as dearly as I love you, Mr. Lexmore."

How the memory of those words smote him! All the tender words of love and regret would never make that still heart throb with joy.

"No human voice could ever be heard by the still cold ear of death."

"Poor little Connie!" he murmured, as he strode down to the river-bank and gazed thoughtfully and with sorrow on the moonlit water, be-

neath which he believed Connie lay in all her sweet young beauty, "my great yearning love for you has come too late."

Ah! if he had but known that at that very moment, Connie, alive, and scarcely five miles distant, was sobbing herself to sleep on her rude couch!

Many an hour Harold Lexmore spent near the river, silently contemplating the dark water.

To Winnie Kinder this strange revelation of feeling on the part of her lover was maddening. In vain she tried to woo him back to his allegiance; but the spell was broken. He shrunk from her and avoided her whenever it was possible.

Yet Miss Kinder would not be discouraged.

"The course of true love never does run smooth, mamma," she would say, in answer to her mother's earnest inquiries as to the existing state of affairs.

Even to herself she would not admit the alarming truth, that Harold Lexmore's heart had grown cold toward her.

One golden afternoon matters came to a crisis. Harold Lexmore had suddenly given out his intention of leaving Lexmore Hall for the present and travelling abroad.

Miss Kinder heard the report with pale cheek and bated breath. She would go to Harold and ask him at once if the report were true.

She wrote him a little pink-tinted, perfumed note, requesting him to see her in the drawing-room an hour after luncheon.

"I have heard that you are going away, Harold," she wrote; "but I will not believe it. My doubting, aching heart must be set at rest by a denial from your lips." She signed the note, "Your loving Winnie."

Harold Lexmore put the letter into his pocket with a sigh. There was a time when those pink-tinted notes in the same delicate handwriting had set his heart beating strangely, but now only annoyance gleamed in his blue eyes.

He had half an hour yet to the time appointed by Winnie in her note, and he spent it out-of-doors with his lawyer, who had run down to Lexmore Hall to find out the young heir's wishes concerning the estate while he remained abroad.

He was an old friend of the major, and stood on terms of the greatest intimacy with the son.

"I have pleasing news concerning you, Mr. Lexmore," he said, as they walked down the broad path toward the arched gate together. "I wonder if I may congratulate you!"

"What is it? I do not know of anything concerning myself that calls for congratulation."

"You are modest," declared the lawyer; "but I have certainly heard, and on good authority, too, that you are about to be married."

"I can only say that I was not in the least aware of it, Mr. Cox."

The lawyer eyed the young man keenly.

"Pray pardon me," he continued; "do not think it is from mere curiosity that I ask the question. Is there really no truth in the report?"

"None whatever," responded Harold, promptly.

"It is strange," said Mr. Cox, musingly. "I had the information on such good authority, too, that you were to marry Miss Winnie Kinder."

"There can be no better authority on the subject," said Harold Lexmore, laughingly, "than myself; and I tell you frankly I do not intend to marry that lady."

"Well," admitted the lawyer, "your word is all the authority needed."

A few moments later they parted, and Harold Lexmore turned to walk back to the house; but in the path before him stood Winnie, her hands clutched tightly over her heart.

"Harold," she said in a low, vibrating voice, "I want to tell you that I overheard all that you said to Mr. Cox. Is it quite true that you do not intend to marry me?"

He tried to laugh to hide his embarrassment, but it was a failure.

"There has been no question of an engagement of marriage between us, has there, Winnie?" he asked, gravely, and with dignity.

"No," she admitted; "but I have always looked upon you as my lover. You have told me you loved me a thousand times, and that led me to

believe that you would one day ask me to become your wife."

He looked greatly distressed. He was a thorough gentleman in word and deed. How could he tell her that his heart had changed toward her since that day she had expressed herself so freely in regard to poor Connie's untimely death, even glorying in it! How he hated the ungracious words that he must speak! Yet it must be done; he must speak plainly to her. The words he must utter, "I have ceased to love you," seemed to him most unmanly; he loathed the idea; yet the sooner they understood each other the better it would be for them both.

And he told her, in the gentlest words he could command, that his heart had changed toward her; that if an engagement had existed between them, were it ever so slight, he would have fulfilled his part of the contract to the very letter; but as nothing of the kind existed she was as free as air, so was he.

The words died away on his lips as he saw the marble pallor of Winnie Kinder's face; her eyes glowed like purple fires.

"I am a victim to the fickleness of a man's love," she cried. "You did love me once, and you would have been mine but for the girl who came between us, Harold Lexmore," she went on, "and I hate her for it—I hate her even in her grave; for I believe in one mad moment, as she stood before you pleading her cause that night, your love turned from me to her. Is it not so she panted."

He was too honourable to deny the truth, and he bowed his head in assent.

"I knew it!" she cried, with a hard, bitter sob. "But it is not too late now that she is dead, to—to—care for me again."

He could not help feeling touched with pity and distress for the humiliation it must have cost this proud girl to speak such words as these.

"If you ever marry I could curse the woman who wins your love!" she cried out. "She shall suffer for it for my vengeance shall fall upon her head just as surely as yonder sun shines."

"Calm yourself, Winnie," he answered, gently, taking her burning hands in his. "I shall never marry—never. I was plighted to Connie living, and now that we have been parted by her own cruel deed down here I shall fulfil that pledge up there."

"You will wreck your life and mine for a foolish vagary! Connie is dead. Why can you not forget her, Harold!" she cried, with a spasm of pain in her voice, "pause and think before you give up such a deathless love as mine."

He shook his head with a sad gesture.

"I am grieved, pained to tell you, Winnie," he said, "but the memory of Connie comes between us."

The next day a thrilling event happened.

CHAPTER XI.

WHEN Doctor Jolly had left the house Treza Webb, contrary to his directions, had given Connie a strong sleeping potion, therefore the noonday sun was shining into the room before the girl opened her dark, wondering eyes.

Again her gaze encountered the dark, unfamiliar face of Treza Webb.

"Will you kindly tell me where I am!" she asked, pitifully.

This time an answer was not denied her.

"You are in good hands," she replied. "George Grenfell saw you take that mad leap into the river, and he saved you and brought you here. I am his aunt. I am his aunt. I have been taking care of you for some time past. You were very ill; we thought you were going to die. Why did you jump into the water!" asked Treza, curiously.

Connie would not answer her; she turned her face to the wall with a bitter groan.

"George has been here every day to inquire about you and leave delicacies. I promised him that he should see you to-day," pursued Treza. "You ought to thank him, at least, for endangering his life to save yours."

"Mine was not worth it," sobbed Connie; "but if you think best I will see him and thank him for his bravery."

George Grenfell smiled at this message was delivered, and tossing aside his cigar, and giving his luxuriant moustache an additional curl with his white fingers, he followed Treza into the sick-room.

He had made quite a toilet for the occasion. His well-proportioned figure was set off to excellent advantage by a cutaway coat and immaculate white duck vest, while his crisp, curling hair and sweeping moustache, together with the white straw hat and ebony walking-stick he carried, gave him quite a jaunty appearance.

"Lord! what a fool a man will make of himself to please the eyes of a bread-and-butter schoolgirl!" muttered Treza, as she beheld him; then she led him into Connie's presence.

She was sitting in a large willow rocking-chair by the open window, though still extremely weak. She wore the white muslin dress she had worn from Lexmore Hall that night, and which had been freshly-laundried by Treza for this very occasion.

"To think that I should owe my life to him," thought Connie, as she beheld him standing smilingly on the threshold; "and I have always disliked him so ever since I have known him."

He advanced, still smiling, taking a seat by her side—too near to quite please Connie.

Out of sheer gratitude for the service he had rendered her, Connie held out her hand, and a flush of anger rose to her face as he raised it to his lips, pressing a kiss upon it, and murmuring how delighted he was to see her looking so well after her terrible accident and ordeal of brain fever through which she had passed.

"I must thank you for saving a human life, Mr. Grenfell," said Connie; "but all the same, I wish you had left me to my fate."

"Why!" he demanded, drawing his chair a trifle nearer her. "You are young, and—beautiful; life should hold golden pleasures in store for you—unlimited joy."

She shook her curly head sadly.

Joy! what joy could there be for her, now that the dazzling gleam of love that had shone upon her heart like a meteor had set in eternal darkness!

Life—all the future years—would be but a sorry pilgrimage to her without Harold Lexmore's love!

"There may come a day when you may have wealth and love, Miss Culver," he went on, eagerly; "then you will rejoice that I did not leave you to your fate."

"I may never have wealth," said Connie; "if I ever should, I shall reward you for what you have done for me."

She stopped abruptly, for the change that came over his face startled her; the light that flashed into his eyes electrified her.

"You have it in your power to reward me now, beautiful Constance!" he cried. Then for a moment a dead silence fell between them. "You have the power to reward me now, beautiful Constance," he repeated. "Give me this little hand for my own—the little hand that I rescued from the cold clasp of death. 'I love you, little one!'" he cried.

"Pardon me if I am brusque and abrupt; have pity on me if my words and actions do not please you. Love will be my redemption; love will make me all that I should be. Oh, Heaven help any man who loves a woman as I love you!"

He had caught hold of her little white hand again, and she was too dazed and bewildered to withdraw it from his firm clasp.

She was quite stunned by his wild, reckless impetuosity, too much surprised to utter one word of interruption or draw her hand away. Passionate words like these terrified her.

All that she knew in her bewilderment was that she was sitting in the willow rocker by the open window, propped up with pillows, and that George Grenfell, the man whom she had always disliked so cordially, and yet to whom she owed such a debt of gratitude, was kneeling at her feet, clasping her hands, and telling her he loved her. She tried to check him, but it was impossible. He

stopped only from sheer exhaustion and want of words, and Connie found her voice.

"Hush!" she cried, her anger getting the better of her resolve to try to feel grateful towards him. "I cannot understand why you speak to me in this way. I may as well tell you the truth; I am trying my best to feel kindly, even grateful to you, but you are forcing me to dislike, even fear you!"

"Do not say that, Connie!" he cried. "I must speak to you or die! I love you, little Connie! Will you be mine?"

"Are you asking me to be your wife, George Grenfell?" she gasped.

"I am indeed so brave," he replied. "You will not refuse," he said.

"I do refuse!" she cried, her brown eyes blazing. "I have been trying hard to respect you, but you will force me even to forget my gratitude towards you. I have heard all the strange tales they tell of you at Lexmore Hall, and I consider words of love from you an insult. I would sooner fling myself back into the river from which you saved me, than listen to words of love from you. I repeat they are an insult!"

She had stung his pride. He sprang to his feet with blazing, wrathful eyes, and for a few moments they looked at each other steadily.

"Have a care, Constance Calver!" he said, hoarsely. "The words you have uttered to-day will live in my heart until the day I die!"

He gazed at her steadily—the lovely, frowning, averted face, the scornful, curling lips, and anger-dilated eyes, and as he gazed, the love which filled his heart changed to deep, undying hate. His love died a violent death; her scornful words had killed it.

"My love an insult!" he repeated, with a harsh laugh. "While I live I shall never forget these words."

"I do not wish you to forget them, Mr. Grenfell," she answered proudly. "I wish you to remember always every word I have said, that such a scene may never be repeated."

"You shall have your wish!" he cried; "every time I look in your face they will come back to me, and I will bring them back to your memory word for word, and they shall pierce your heart like sword points. Now, Miss Calver, hear what I have to say. I would have won you for my wife with love and fair means had it been possible; but now that you have made it impossible I tell you plainly you shall marry me. You have treated me with harshness and contempt, and I swear I will use my power over you without mercy. I will humble your pride to the very dust. My love an insult, indeed! You shall rue the hour in which those words fell from your lips."

"What power do you pretend to have over me?" flashed out Constance, spiritedly. "I am only a young girl, and very ignorant of the ways of the world, I admit, but I know this much, in this free country no man can force a girl to marry him against her will!"

"We shall see what we shall see within a week my scornful beauty," he answered, picking up his hat and cane. "You shall be Mrs. Grenfell within twenty-four hours, depend upon that."

"You are trying to frighten me," she said. "I defy you to put your threat into execution."

"I may as well tell you that there are such things as special licenses. Au revoir, my charming Connie," he said, standing on the threshold and raising his straw hat jauntily from his dark curls with a low bow. "When I return I shall hope to hear that you think more kindly of your husband than that is soon to be, and that you have succumbed to the inevitable with smiles instead of tears."

"Never!" cried Connie, fairly trembling with rage; "I tell you solemnly, I shall never marry you. Remember my words—I will die first!"

CHAPTER XII.

The door closed after George Grenfell with a bang, and Connie sank back in her chair with a white, terrified face.

"Marry him! marry him! I would die first!" she broke out indignantly, clenching her little

white hands until the delicate finger-nails bruised the tender white palms.

"When he returns he shall not find me here," she said to herself.

She sprang to her feet, but a low cry fell from her lips as she realised how weak and dizzy she was.

She groped her way to the door and turned the handle nervously; but to her consternation she found that it was fastened upon the outside.

The next moment the door opened, and Treza Webb stood on the threshold.

"What do you want?" she asked, sharply.

"I am going away," said Connie, simply. "I thank you gratefully for all that you have done for me, and if the time ever comes when I can repay you, I will do so with pleasure; until then, farewell."

She attempted to pass Treza Webb, who still stood grimly in the doorway, but that person caught her arm in a firm grasp.

"You're not to leave here, my young lady; that's Mr. Grenfell's express orders," she exclaimed, forcing her back into the room.

"Are you against me, too? You are George Grenfell's aunt. I see there is little use in appealing to you. What your motives are in attempting to keep me here, and to encourage a marriage between your nephew and myself, I cannot comprehend. I am quite as much mystified as indignant. If I were an heiress, I should think it was for my money; but as I am only a poor, penniless girl, your object is beyond my comprehension," exclaimed Constance, passionately.

"Ah, if she only knew," thought Treza Webb. "If she but dreamed why George Grenfell is so anxious to secure her for his bride, how amazed she would be, to be sure!"

She had advanced into the room, relaxing her hold upon Connie's white, slender arm, and at that moment, swift as a flash, Connie sprang through the open doorway; but quick as thought Treza had grasped the skirt of her dress, and in the scuffle which ensued Connie fell back in her arms in a dead faint, her head coming in contact with the casement as she fell.

Treza laid her charge quickly on the bed and commenced applying restoratives, rubbing the girl's cold, white hands and blue-veined temples vigorously; but an hour passed, and despite Treza's strenuous efforts, Constance did not revive.

"There will be the very mischief to pay when George comes back and finds this state of things," she muttered; "and there can be no wedding if she's like this."

She thought of the startling revelation George Grenfell had made concerning the girl, which he had whispered into her startled ear after he had sworn her to eternal silence; she remembered his closing words,—

"Take great care of the girl, Treza; watch her as Aladdin watched his lamp, for she is to you and me what that lamp was to Aladdin. And the day that sees me her wedded husband will make you rich for life. If she dies, there is an end to our golden dreams; remember that."

A strange fate had been playing directly into the schemer's hands.

On the night which followed his thrilling revelation to Treza, he had haunted the grounds of Lexmore Park as usual, waiting patiently an opportunity to make his way into the Hall and up into the tower unobserved.

As he watched, a woman's figure passed quickly before the window in the tower. Her face was turned directly toward him in the moonlight, and he knew that it was Winnie Kinder.

"What is she doing there?" he asked himself. "Can she suspect?"

The cold perspiration stood out in beads upon George Grenfell's forehead. If any one should by chance examine and take possession of those papers concerning Connie, which he knew that the iron-bound oak chest contained, the great scheme which he had concocted would be useless.

He almost held his breath when, a moment later, Winnie Kinder crossed the moonlit porch, gliding into the grounds with the identical oak box in her jewelled hands.

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She went straight to a dark sheet of water that skirted the park, and was about to consign the casket into its depths, when it was snatched from her hand, and wheeling swiftly around with a low cry, she found herself face to face with George Grenfell, the ex-secretary.

"What do you mean by such an outrage!" exclaimed Winnie Kinder, white to the lips, yet with a ring of terror in her haughty voice.

"Because I know its contents," he replied, coolly. "Why should you wish to destroy it, Miss Kinder? Let me answer for you. You have discovered the import of the papers!" he exclaimed; "and you would consign the proofs of Constance Culver's strange secret to these silent waters."

"Well!" exclaimed Winnie, affecting a cool bravado she was far from feeling. "What if your surmise be correct, what then? I ask. The girl is dead, therefore the papers are useless."

"To you, perhaps, but not to me," George Grenfell answered. "I shall therefore take charge of the box and its contents. You will not dare to betray me, Miss Kinder. You would not have these papers published to public knowledge for a small fortune, I fancy."

Winnie Kinder staggered back against one of the beech trees, vainly attempting to stay the wild throbbing of her heart. She knew she was in his power, and would be from that moment until the day she died, and she knew, too, that she must temporize with him—it was the only way.

She came nearer and laid her beautiful white hand on his arm, raising her lovely face to his in the clear white moonlight, and giving him the full benefit of those dark, alluring eyes that the hearts of men rarely resisted.

"Mr. Grenfell," she said in her low, thrilling voice, sweet as the notes of a nightingale, "for my sake throw that box into the river, and when I am once Harold Lexmore's bride, you shall name your own reward. I will settle the half or the whole of the fortune upon you which I shall receive. You are young and kind of heart; you cannot see a woman pleading to you with tears and sobs, as I am pleading now, and refuse to grant her request! The contents of that fatal box cannot concern or interest you, as this girl Constance is dead. Why, then, will you refuse to grant my prayer?"

In vain he expostulated. Winnie argued and prayed.

He hesitated a moment, and she thought he was lost.

"You have conquered," he said; "the box shall be thrown into the river."

As they passed along through the patches of alternate shadow and moonlight as they sifted through the overarching trees, Minnie did not notice that he slipped the contents of the casket into his pocket, and that it was but the empty box which he tossed into the black waters in answer to her pleadings.

It was while on their way to the river that Harold Lexmore had beheld them walking together and talking so confidentially much to his intense surprise.

But we must now return to Connie, whom we left lying white and rigid upon the bed, while Treva Webb bent over her, applying restoratives to rouse her from her lethargic fit.

Was the girl going to die after all, and the golden prize slip through their fingers at almost the very hour of success! Treva asked herself, her nervousness increasing. No, it should not be; she must live. She would increase the strong potion that had been left by the doctor for such an emergency as this—yes, she would double it—quadruple it.

And without waiting to secure a glass, she poured between the girl's white lips half the contents of the vial the doctor had left.

The result of the overdose was alarming. There was a violent contraction of the girl's muscles, the face grew livid, then turned to the hue of death. There was a short, sharp struggle for breath, a violent spasm, then the muscle suddenly relaxed, and Constance Culver's heart ceased to beat.

"Oh, good Lord, good Lord! what have I done?" cried the woman, in mortal terror. "Oh, I have given her too much; and instead of bringing her out of her swoon, it has killed her!"

In vain she redoubled her exertions to chafe the cold hands and blue-veined temples. They grew cold with the clammy chill of death beneath her trembling touch.

And thus, an hour later, George Grenfell found her, when he returned to inform her that he had made arrangements to have the ceremony performed the following day, and that in the meantime she must keep a strict watch on Connie's movements.

His intense rage knew no limits.

"Dead!" he exclaimed, bending over the beautiful form, and placing his hand over the pulseless heart. "How did it come about, woman! No prevarications, I say—tell me at once how you managed to wrest the golden prize from my grasp by letting it slip through your fingers. I could curse you for it," he cried, with a terrible groan.

And in a terrible voice Treva Webb told him truthfully just how it had happened; to bring the girl out of her lengthy swoon she had given her an overdose; it had brought her death instead.

"Fool—most accursed fool!" cried Grenfell, smiting his breast with his clenched hand in his mad rage. "Her death ruins me!"

He picked up his straw hat and strode toward the door; but Treva Webb intercepted him.

"Out of my way, woman!" he cried. "Never let me look upon your face again!"

"What shall I do with the girl in yonder, George!" she asked. "Surely, you are not going to leave her on my hands like this are you?"

He crushed out a jeering, horrible laugh from beneath his white teeth.

"Do! Why do what you please with her!" he cried.

"But surely," she cried aghast, "you—"

The slamming of the door behind him cut her words short.

George Grenfell strode away from the house fairly raging with this terrible disappointment. He little knew of the thrilling event which was to transpire as he saw Treva again.

(To be continued.)

KNOWLEDGE is valuable as a lever to lift men and women to a higher plane of being; but it is not in itself the be-all and the end-all of existence. The passion for knowing is superior to the knowledge itself, but both together are not sufficient to ensure the welfare of a nation. There must also be the desire, the effort, and the wisdom so to use the knowledge as to improve and exalt the character, and so to cultivate the whole nature of those we teach as to make them not only better scholars, but better and nobler men and women.

THE fine old church of St. Bride, Fleet-street, is open to all who care to enter, but the hurrying-scurrying pedestrians possibly never see it. The church, which is walled in by houses, was built by Sir Christopher Wren in 1680 on the ruins of an old structure which had been destroyed in the great fire; and it is memorable as having the highest steeple (226 feet) of any of the forty-nine churches which the industrious Wren raised in London Town. It is redolent of the old time, quiet and secluded, in striking contrast to the uproar of Fleet-street, a few yards beyond; and its association with literature is significant. Wynken de Worde, the great sixteenth century printer, lies buried there. Richard Lovelace, the cavalier poet, who died penniless, and the Earl of Dorset, a poet and the patron of John Dryden, rest within its walls. Sir Richard Baker, whose "Chronicles of the Kings of England" afforded such pleasure to Sir Roger de Coverley, was buried in St. Bride; while, greatest of all, Samuel Richardson, the writer of "Clarissa Harlowe," who was a printer in Salisbury-court, was interred in the middle aisle in 1761.

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FACETIE.

SHE: "When you married me you said you were well off." He: "I was, but I didn't know it."

THE BLONDE: "I wonder if I shall ever live to be a hundred?" The Brunette: "Not if you remain twenty-two much longer."

MAUD: "Miriam is trying to keep her engagement a secret." Martha: "How do you know?" Maud: "She told me so."

CRIVIO: "Where did you get the idea for that poster picture?" Painter: "Out of my head." "You must be glad it's out."

MANAGER: "I thought I heard some high words in the theatre just now." "You did, sir; very high, sir." "What were they over?" "A lady's hat, sir."

TEACHER (to scholar): "What are you laughing at? Not at me!" Scholar: "Oh, no, sir." Teacher: "Then what else is there in the room to laugh at?"

MISS ROBSON: "I don't think Fred will be long in coming to the point now." Mrs. Robson: "Why not?" Miss Robson: "Because he's beginning to worry about your bad temper."

HE: "I know it's sudden, but I love you. Your father will never give his consent to our marriage, and so we must elope. Can you get your luggage packed in time to start to-morrow night?" She: "It is packed now."

"WHAT is your new painting called?" The Gleaner: "Ah, a young girl with a sickle and a bundle of grain!" "No; an elderly girl with a flat pocket-book and an armful of bargain dry-goods."

DAUGHTER: "Father, I wish to marry the count." Father: "But, from the reports I hear, the fellow is not worth much." Daughter: "Then, father, if he isn't worth much, you certainly could afford to buy him for me."

"WHAT's the matter, Waterston? You look quite blue." "Things have gone wrong. I seem to be losing my individuality." "Cheer up, old chap. The best thing that could happen to you."

"Does your wife take any interest in current politics?" asked the earnest woman. "Now," replied Mr. Roddarm, "she don't. But if it's currant jelly or currant pie, why I believe she could tell you more things about 'em than you ever dreamt of."

"You should get your ears lopped, Brian," said a "smart" tourist to an Irish peasant, whom he was quailing; "they're too large for a man." "An' bated," replied the Hibernian, "I was just thinkin' yours would want to be made larger; sure they're too small for an ass."

HUMPHY HIGGINS: "Wot is a pessimist?" Weary Watkins: "You know Dismal Dawson?" "Yes." "An' the other day you heard 'm say that he believed they come a time when ev'rybody would have to work! Well, he's one of them fellers!"

MATINEE GIRL: "It's perfectly absurd, this clamour about our hats. People who can't see over them had better not go to the theatre." Her Friend: "I know; that's what I told my husband; and he said 'All right, we won't go,' and we don't."

MILLIONAIRE: "You ask for the hand of my daughter. You are a journalist, I believe, and journalists, I am told, can scarcely earn their salt." Young Editor (with dignity): "You mistake, sir. I am a newspaper man." "Oh! Keep a news-stand, I presume. Good paying business! Take her, my son, and be happy."

"I NOTICE," said the affable manager of the summer theatre to the leading lady, "quite a strong resemblance between the soubrette and yourself. Although you do not look it," he continued, gallantly, "may I ask if your relations are not those of mother and daughter?" "Yes, sir," said the leading lady, going proudly at the winsome form of the "Little Cyclone of Meriment," "and mamma carries her years well, doesn't she?"

WATSON: "But how did you detect the fellow? His disguise as a woman was absolutely perfect." Sherlock Holmes: "I noticed that when the supposed woman sat down she gave her dress a little jerk with both hands, as if to keep it from bagging at the knees."

MISTRESS: "How is it, Mary, that whenever I come into the kitchen I find you gossiping with the baker or butcher?" Maid: "Well, ma'am, if you really ask for the truth, I should say as it was them nasty soft-soled shoes you come creepin' about in."

"I DON'T believe Milliken is the sort of man I would care to introduce to my wife." "Milliken! Why, he's one of the most perfect gentlemen I ever knew." "Yes; I don't care to have him held up to me as a model all the time."

SHE: "I don't see what reason you have for expecting anything but a refusal. I never gave you any encouragement." He (just rejected): "Oh, Miss Gotrox—Maud! You did—you most certainly did greatly encourage me! You told me you were worth £50,000 in your own right."

"En—you see, governor," said the young man, as tenderly as he could, "you see, father, you are just a bit of an old fogey." "I suppose I am," admitted the old gentleman. "It is a sort of family failing. My father was the same way when I was of your age."

"THEY tell me that Garrick was a great actor," said the impersonator of the whistling tramp. "Don't you believe it," replied the comedian. "He was good enough in some of them old Shakespearean parts, but get him into an up-to-date vaudeville and the audience would hiss him."

THE DOCTOR: "Mrs. Brown has sent for me to go and see her boy, and I must go at once." His Wife: "What is the matter with the boy?" The Doctor: "I don't know; but Mrs. Brown has a book on 'What to Do Before the Doctor Comes,' and I must hurry up before she does it or the boy will be dead."

"I would like to be excused, your honour," said a man who had been summoned on the jury. "What for?" "I owe a man five pounds, and I want to hunt him up and pay it." "Do you mean to say you would hunt up a man to pay a bill, instead of waiting for him to hunt you up?"

"Yes, your honour." "Do you belong to London?" "Yes, sir." "You are excused. I don't want any man on the jury who will lie like that."

VISITING SISTER: "Why were you so cross to your husband at breakfast?" Wife: "I just couldn't help it. I felt as if I must scold at somebody or burst. Just physical irritability, you know—and then everything went wrong. Breakfast was late, the steak burnt, the coffee thin and cakes heavy." "Then why didn't you scold the cook?" "Oh, I couldn't—she'd leave."

SWEET GIRL (anxiously): "Did Fred—I mean Mr. Nicsefell—call to see you to-day, papa?" Papa: "Yes, and to oblige him I consented." "I suppose time hangs heavy on his hands." Sweet Girl (mystified): "Why—why, what did he say?" Papa: "He requested the pleasure of series of games of chess with me. The first one we will play this evening, and after that, every third evening during the winter. I hope, my dear, you will keep out of the library, as chess is a very absorbing occupation."

"CAN I talk to you a few minutes?" asked the life insurance agent. "Yes," replied the superintendent of the factory, "if you don't mind walking about the building with me. I haven't really the time to sit down." "That's all right," said the agent. "I'd rather move around a little, anyhow." The superintendent led the way out to the pattern room, thence into the wood-workers' department, stopping every moment or two to converse with some operative, and took his caller at last into the room where the huge trip-hammers were filling the air with their unearthly din. "Now," he said, yelling into the ear of the life insurance man, "I am ready to listen to you. Go ahead."

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SOCIETY.

THE Prince of Wales now has three separate horse studs at Sandringham.

Most of the Jubilee guests will stay in London until Friday, July 2nd, which is a two days longer visit than was originally settled, but there are so many functions that it has been found necessary to postpone the Aldershot review from the 29th until July 1st.

Few Queens have had more vicissitudes than Queen Louise of Denmark, who, through her entire life, has shown her noble character and strength of purpose. She has lived to see all the members of her family happy and successful, and only in her old age has come the great trial of the present war between Greece and Turkey. Until now all had gone well with the descendants of the King and Queen of Denmark.

BETWEEN sixty and seventy guests will be invited to dine with the Prince and Princess of Wales on board the *Victoria and Albert* on Naval Carnival Day. Covers will be laid in the saloon on deck for the Royals and principal guests, while the remainder will be accommodated in the saloon right aft below, round which hang the photographs of every Captain who has commanded the Royal yacht during the Queen's reign.

THE Queen saw her first race when she was only eleven years old. She went to the meeting at Worcester with her mother, the Duchess of Kent, while on a tour in the Midlands, and it is a remarkable fact that Goodwood, then a three days' meeting, and Worcester were held on the same date, and that Princess Victoria was attending the more humble meeting on the very afternoon on which her uncle, William IV., was running first, second, and third horses for the Gold Cup in the Duke of Richmond's park. The following year her Majesty visited Epsom with her mother.

THE Emperors Francis Joseph of Austria-Hungary, and William II. of Germany, and the Kings Albert of Saxony, Carl of Roumania, and Alexander of Serbia will take part in the autumn manoeuvres at Tofia, in Hungary. According to present arrangements, the manoeuvres will last four days, and the five monarchs will, during that period, be accommodated with apartments in the famous castle at Tofia, which belonged to the late Count Nicholas Esterhazy. Kaiser William's long-promised visit to the Hungarian capital figures in the Imperial programme, as does also a stay of three days at Balnye, as the guest of Archduke Friedrich, to shoot over the very extensive Archducal preserves.

THE Duke of York is to be the guest of Lord Ellesmere at Worsley Hall when he visits Manchester at the end of this month to attend the exhibition of the Royal Agricultural Society. The Queen and Prince Albert spent several days at Worsley in October, 1851, when they were the guests of the first Earl and Countess of Ellesmere, who were more generally known as Lord and Lady Francis Egerton. The Duke is to arrive at Worsley on the evening of Sunday, the 27th, and the next day he will visit the show in Trafford Park, proceeding to Manchester along the Bridgewater Canal in the state barge which was used by the Queen and Prince Albert in 1851.

PRINCE ERNEST of Saxe-Altenburg, nephew and heir of the reigning Grand Duke, has been betrothed to the Princess Adelaide of Schaumburg-Lippe, the daughter of Prince William of Schaumburg-Lippe, and sister of the Queen of Württemberg and of the Princess of Waldeck-Pyrmont. Her eldest brother, Prince Frederick, was married in May last year to Princess Louise of Denmark, eldest daughter of the Crown Prince. Prince William of Schaumburg-Lippe, who owns large estates in Bohemia and Moravia, is married to Princess Adelaide of Anhalt, whose mother was a sister of the Queen of Denmark and a niece of the late Duchess of Cambridge. Prince Ernest was born in August, 1871, and Princess Adelaide is four years his junior. The betrothal took place at Dessau.

STATISTICS.

It costs £50 a year to dust the books in the library of the House of Lords.

COAL TAR, when used for dyes, yields sixteen shades of blue, the same number of yellow tints, twelve of orange, nine of violet, and numerous other colours and shades.

It has been estimated from the stamp duties paid by patent medicine makers that four millions of pills are taken by the inhabitants of the United Kingdom every week. In France the quantity is about half. Only about one million are taken by the people of Russia. The Australians are the biggest pill takers in the world.

If the human being possessed strength as great in proportion as that of shellfish, the average man would be able to lift the enormous weight of 2,976,000 pounds, pulling in the same degree as a limpet. And if the man pulled in the same proportionate degree as the cockle, he would sustain a weight of no less than 3,106,500 pounds.

GEMS.

You can speak well if your tongue delivers the message of your heart.

EVERY duty, even the least duty, involves the whole principle of obedience, and little duties make the will dutiful—that is, supple and prompt to obey.

THE same landscape appears beautiful or ugly according to what the weather may be, and the same opinion appears to one reasonable or foolish according to the sentiments which dominate us at the time.

HOUSEHOLD TREASURES.

JELLY ORANGES.—Cut an orange in halves, remove the pulp and juice without marring the peel, and fill each half even to the edge with orange jelly made with gelatine and the orange juice. Fit the halves together and serve an orange to each person. This is a dainty dessert for guests.

COCONUT CREAM.—Put one-half condensed coconut cream to soak in a cup of milk two hours. Put a cup of milk in a jug; set the jug in a saucepan of boiling water, and let the milk come to a boil; then stir in a well-beaten egg. Add the coconut and cook for five minutes, stirring often. When done, put in moulds; place on ice to get cold. Serve with jelly.

ASPARAGUS IN CRUSTS.—Make a white sauce with one tablespoonful each of butter and flour, one and one-half cups milk. When rather thick add one pint of asparagus tops, and heat all together. Just before serving stir in two slightly beaten eggs, cook all together for two minutes over hot water, and when thick season to taste with salt and pepper, and fill the crusts with the mixture. Serve very hot.

STRAWBERRY TAPIOCA.—Wash one cup pearl tapioca, and put to cook in the double boiler, with one quart boiling water, and one saltspoonful of salt. Cook until perfectly transparent, which will probably be in about an hour. Add a quart of ripe strawberries, sweetening to taste. Take from the fire, and put in the ice box to cool. Serve very cold, with sugar and cream, or whipped cream. This will serve ten persons.

TIMBOL PUDDING.—Cook some long sticks of macaroni until tender, butter a round basin, and line it with the macaroni placed round and round. Mix gradually two ounces of rice with three-quarters of a pint of milk. Boil until the rice is cooked, then add a beaten egg, sugar and flavouring to taste. Pour the mixture into the lined mould, cover with greased paper. Steam for an hour, turn out, and serve with wine sauce poured over.

MISCELLANEOUS.

ON July 13th the Queen will proceed to Osborne for her usual summer residence in the Isle of Wight, which will extend over six weeks.

ONE of the severest penalties to which criminals in Holland were in ancient times condemned was to be deprived of the use of salt.

THE latest Jubilee novelty is "a walking-stick seat and table." The legs are pivoted on a three-armed pin, the seat folding into a slot or recessed part, and the legs fitting closely together for use as a cane.

THE Mexican torch thistle, growing to a height of fifty or sixty feet, looks more like a candelabra than a tree. Another variety of the same species has long, grey bristles, which give it the appearance of the head of an old grey-haired man.

HORSE-RACING without jockeys is indulged in at Rome during the summer. The horses are started by a gun, which is discharged behind them. They carry little spiked balls on cords which swing round their bodies, and these act as spurs.

THE depth to which the sun's rays penetrate water has been recently determined by the aid of photography. It has been found that at a depth of 555 feet the darkness was, to all intents and purposes, the same as that on a clear but moonless night. Sensitive plates exposed at this depth for a considerable length of time gave no evidence of light-action.

THE breed of show-white cattle, which were used in the sacrifices in Athens and Rome from two thousand to twenty-five hundred years ago, is still in existence in Calabria, Italy. Great pains are taken to maintain the strain of blood in all its purity, and calves showing a single hair of any other colour than white are at once separated from the herd.

"ZINC wall-paper" is the latest oddity. The zinc is attached to the wall by a cement invented for the purpose, and is made to imitate marble. The surface is enamelled so as to render it permanent or washable. It is claimed for this new departure in decorative material that, while it is as permanent as tiles or marble, it is much cheaper, and can be as easily put on as ordinary wall-paper.

OSTRICH eggs sometimes explode like bombshells. A very large egg, in which Dr. Bayer, the American scientist, was boring a hole for the purpose of extracting the contents, had become very much addled, and the gases generating inside caused it to blow up in his hand, the flying fragments of shell injuring him severely. The ostrich eggshell is about a quarter of an inch thick, and as hard as flint.

IN the neighbourhood of the Bermudas the sea is extremely transparent, so that the fishermen can readily see the horns of the lobsters protruding from their hiding places in the rocks at considerable depth. To entice the crustaceans from these crannies they tie a lot of snails in a ball and dangle them in front of the cautious lobster. When he grabs the ball they haul him up.

Nobody seems to know even approximately what is the total output of Bibles at the present time. There are reckoned to be about seventy centres of production and distribution, but what is the extent of their work there are no means of ascertaining. Of distributing associations there are four principal ones—the British and Foreign Bible Society, the American Bible Society, the Scotch and the Dutch. Of these the London society is by far the largest. The societies affiliated with it in various parts of the world number over 7,000. It has its own agents, depôts, and colporteurs all over Europe, and throughout India, China, and other countries. Of colporteurs alone it employs nearly 600 in various parts of the world. It issues its publications in over 300 different languages, and there are at the present time not far short of 1,000 men, missionaries and others, engaged in making other translations or improving existing ones.

NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Cecil.—Only a lawyer can tell you.
Erin.—Any bookseller will tell you.
G. M.—You could ascertain at Scotland-yard.
Alfred.—The Indian Mutiny occurred in 1857.
Isidore.—You are entitled to six months' notice.
P. G.—The pennies of 1864 have no exceptional value.
E. R.—Queen Elizabeth's reign lasted from 1558 to 1603.

J. J.—The beautiful green of malachite is due to copper.

Philip.—We suggest that you write to the magazine named.

Adam.—Write to the secretary. We do not give addresses.

Unhappy.—Decline either to speak to or look at the fellow again.

Quaker.—Finland is properly Fenland "the land of the marshes."

Emile.—You cannot compel your late employer to give you a reference.

H. M.—Only a lawyer can advise you as to the proof that would be required.

Worried.—Dry salt liberally strewn over the place, and repeated if necessary.

Anxious.—It would be a gross breach of good faith to comply with your request.

D. D.—The Queen has no surname, and her marriage did not alter her regal status.

Jimmy.—Apply to the recruiting department, where full information will be given.

N. J.—It would be both dangerous and disfiguring if attempted by an unpractised hand.

Will.—The will must be proved within a "reasonable" time. There is no definite limit.

Constant Reader.—Eagles rarely change their mates, as do other birds. They usually mate for life.

Norrie.—"Bradshaw's Railway Guide" comes nearest to your requirements of anything we know.

Harassed.—Pay no attention to the gossip of jealous neighbours, and keep straight on in the path mapped out.

Florence.—Nothing but opening and removing the feathers, followed by a thorough good washing, will cleanse it.

N. S.—Diluted oxalic acid, afterwards sponged off with water, removes most stains of the sort from leather.

Trudy.—The Ozar married on November 26th, 1894, the granddaughter of Queen Victoria, daughter of Princess Alice.

Interested.—Authorities differ in fixing upon the hottest town in the world, it being variously stated to be Mecca, Calcutta, and Muscat.

P. B.—You can commence business in London or anywhere else you choose. The "freedom" of a city is now an honorary distinction.

Mildred.—A domestic servant must give, and is entitled to receive, a month's notice, unless there is a distinct agreement to the contrary.

Puzzled.—The traditional association of cats with old maids comes, it is said, from the fact that in the Middle Ages cats were always kept in nurseries.

F. M.—It was named from the battle of Hastings, between William the Conqueror and King Harold, which was fought near the town, October 16th, 1066.

Anxious Mother.—Castor oil heated and thoroughly rubbed over the abdomen will sometimes act as effectually in the case of children as if given internally.

Robbie.—Do not wear a silk hat. It will only make your lack of luck more evident. Wear a boyish style of dress, trim and neat.

P. G.—It might be questioned if the idea was practical. Surely the wick must be very brittle and would break almost at a touch.

Old Subscribers.—A list of deserters from the army is kept at the Horse Guards, and a printed copy forwarded to all headquarters of regiments and recruiting depots.

Nervous.—To distinguish a mushroom from a toad-stool, sprinkle salt on the under side. If it turns black the vegetable is edible; if yellow, it is poisonous.

Fella.—To remove stubborn stains and marks from paint, sprinkle a little powdered pumice stone upon a cloth wrung out of warm soapsuds and apply to the spots.

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Chrysomel.—Spread on the stain a thin paste composed of ether and carbonate of magnesia; when the ether has evaporated and the magnesia dried brush it away or rub it off with bread crumb. This is the proper way to treat silk under the circumstances; as to the colour being injured that depends upon the dye.

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Sir Galahad.—The title, knight, is derived from the Saxons "Gahkt" or "Knecht," a servant. These Chikits served the king in his wars.

Dick Whittington.—The title of the chief magistrate of London was changed from that of balliol to mayor in the reign of Richard I.

H. L.—If a notice to quit is properly addressed and posted in the presence of witnesses, it is binding on the person to whom it is addressed, even if he never receives it.

S. K.—You must either write to, or by personal inquiry discover, the individual holding the situation of "shore steward" to any line or company; he makes the sea-going appointments.

THE SLEEPING BEAUTY IN THE WOOD.

WREATH all the flowers that deck the wayside hedge

Into a chaplet for her sunny brow,
 Step soft if thou would'st lay it there—she sleeps
 At noon deep in the dell beside the rill.
 And ah! Narcissus, gazing in that rill,
 Would turn from his sweet image to her face;
 One little hand upon her sinless breast—

But dare I call it sinless? This were sin.
 Yet o'er her sins to me are sinlessness.
 She, crystalline of soul, like dewdrops thick
 Upon the mead at morn: a limpid pool
 Her soul; and all my life's sweet sins
 Come back as whips, ay, as a scorpion's bite,
 When in that holy mirror I look down.

Wake not, dear image of my dream! Sleep on
 In English dreams. Oh, if one passing wind
 That stirs the curl upon thy saintly brow
 May breathe this sigh for me, if thou shouldst wake
 I would be timid as the hind that flees
 Far down dense glades, for I would break thy dream.

Oh, were my soul so limpid! Could I gaze
 In thy soft eyes, so dumbly questioning,
 And not reflect the shadow of some sin
 To thee all unfamiliar, I would hide
 In those sweet realms of utter solitude
 Till thou shouldst wake. But now I must away.
 But one soft kiss upon that other hand
 That lies so lightly on the rock beside

The purring rill—she stirs—and like the hind
 I am away—yet had I once looked back
 Down the sweet tangle, haply had I seen
 Forgiveness in her smile—dear, sinless kiss!
 Which I shall treasure. Oh, I love these lips
 That have once fed on such rare loveliness!

I would not wound thee, dearest, sweetest hand.
 Nay, shouldst thou to another's will resign
 Thy life, thyself, and, with thyself, that hand,
 It boots not, how with gems and jewels bright,
 I still would cherish in my solitude,
 Here in this dell, beside this rock, this rill,
 The lingering sweetness of that golden day,
 The sweet aroma of thy finger tips,
 As if a holy chalice touched my lips.

Very Frightened.—The cutting of the tonsils in the throat is an everyday affair that should not cause really any pain, and need not be in the least degree dangerous in the hands of an experienced surgeon.

Irre.—He knows he is not acting honourably, and he will respect you for letting him see that you know it, too, and resent it. A woman can be gentle and lady-like, yet show a proper sense of what is due to her.

Oliver.—All unkind and untruthful gossip is dangerous to somebody's peace of mind. It may not do any very great harm, but it makes the victim very uncomfortable, and sometimes very unhappy.

L. B.—Louis Philippe, King of the French, escaped in disguise from Paris at the revolution of 1848. He reached England on March 8th, and Claremont became his home until his death, August 26th, 1850.

Curious One.—The origin of the term. "Mind your P's and Q's," was, without doubt, from the practice of scoring tavern debts to customers, P's meaning pints and Q's quarts.

Harry.—If thoroughly bright and free from rust when put away, the rusture from moulding being carefully removed when doing so, then store them in powdered quicklime, excluding the air, and keep them in a dry place.

Pinty One.—Starfish commit suicide. When one is caught with a net it dissolves itself into many pieces, which escape through the meshes. In time each piece becomes a perfect animal. To preserve a starfish it must be plunged into a bucket of fresh water before it has had time to take the alarm. Fresh water is instant death to it.

Anxious to Know.—Every day in the week is set apart by different nations for public worship:—Sunday by the Christians, Monday by the Greeks, Tuesday by the Persians, Wednesday by the Assyrians, Thursday by the Egyptians, Friday by the Turks, and Saturday by the Jews. Almost every moment there is a Sabbath somewhere.

Housewife.—Any want of cleanliness in the vessels might do it, or many other things, such as not using proper proportions in making or having it in too hot a place. You might try clarifying with lard and transferring into another vessel, but knowing so little of the condition and causes we are unable to suggest how to remedy it.

Curious.—Soyla is pronounced Sillah; Charybdis, Ka-rib-dis, the expression having its origin in the fabulous legend of a monster bearing the latter name, who dwelt on a rock in the whirlpool called from him opposite to Cape Soylla, on the coast of Southern Italy. The fable states that thrice each day he sucked down the waters of the sea, and any luckless vessel that happened to pass at such time was destroyed.

Unhappy Pam.—Your own lover should not be held blameless in the matter. He must have perceived that his encouragement of your rival's flirtation with him was very vexatious to you, and he should have at once desisted from it. While you censure the one do not forget to chide the other. Both are to blame, though perhaps not to the same extent as the flirtation began with her. Still, he should have known better.

Mrs.—If the tongue has been long in pickle it may be soaked for a few hours; if not, it should be washed; run a skewer under the tongue so as to put it into shape; then put in a pot large enough not to crush it, and cover it well with cold water; when it boils let it simmer gently for three hours; if it is a very large tongue it may get three and a half hours; take it out and skin it carefully, beginning at the point; it should stand till cold, and may then be glazed a little.

R. P.—Parboil the oysters in their own liquor, skim and drain them and cut in rather small pieces; pour over them a French dressing while they are hot, and let them stand for an hour or two. When ready to serve, drain again, add one-half of the quantity by measure of chopped celery and mix with a mayonnaise. Serve on a bed of lettuce leaves and garnish with fans of cucumber pickles. These fans are made by cutting cucumber pickles lengthwise, in strips as thin as possible, without detaching the stems.

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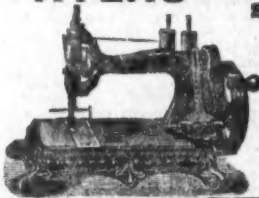
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